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**HEARING VOICES:  
FEMALE TRANSMISSION OF MEMORIES  
IN OKINAWAN LITERATURE IN THE 1970S AND 1980S**

A Thesis Presented

by

ERUMI HONDA

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

May 2010

Asian Languages and Literatures Program  
Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures

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ABSTRACT

HEARING VOICES:  
FEMALE TRANSMISSION OF MEMORIES  
IN OKINAWAN LITERATURE IN THE 1970S AND 1980S

MAY 2010

ERUMI HONDA, B.A., KANSAI GAIDAI UNIVERSITY AND UNION COLLEGE

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Directed by: Professor Doris G. Borgen

In this thesis, using Ōshiro Tatsuhiro's "Meiro" (Maze, 1991) and Nakandakari Hatsu's "Hahatachi onnatachi" (Mothers/Women, 1984) as primary sources, I have pursued two main questions about postwar Okinawan literature: the question of how memory is transmitted, along gender lines, about a traumatic past through the generations and the question of *yuta* operating as transmitters, and anchors of cultural identity under the threat of foreign influence.

Both "Maze" and "Mothers/Women" address the issue of postwar Okinawan identity in the face of an influx of new ideas and practices by portraying Okinawan women's struggle to find their identity. These two stories reveal the link between women's spirituality and the construction of Okinawan postwar identity. In doing so, they demonstrate how the Okinawan religious view of women as spiritual and religious figures have inspired Okinawan authors to construct narratives of postwar Okinawan society and Okinawan people's lives therein.

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## INTRODUCTION

The well-known Okinawan author, Ōshiro Tatsuhiko, once wrote in his personal accounts on his activities of literary production in postwar Okinawa. Since the early stage of the postwar period in the 1950s, he “had always had the desire of writing the realities of Okinawa.”<sup>1</sup> In Ōshiro’s words,

In fact, with the awareness of the peculiarity of postwar Okinawa society, there was a growing demand from the ordinary audience to read works that depicted the situation of Okinawa. However, it seemed to me that describing the realities of Okinawa was not easy. Of course it was due to the lack of my skills, but I also felt that since the realities were so complex that I had no clue what to begin with. The realities were too complicated because living close together with the American military did not simply bring disadvantages but also advantages. It also produced funny anecdotes. Culture shock has many aspects that are very hard to deal with.<sup>2</sup>

This Master’s thesis is my attempt to explore the question of what it has been like to live in Okinawa after World War II through examining literary texts set in postwar Okinawa. In particular, I will explore the ways in which Okinawan authors portray the complex realities of Okinawa after its reversion to Japan in 1972. Okamoto Keitoku made observations about the post-reversion period between the late 1970s and early 1980s and argued that this period was characterized by rapid “Japanization” and urbanization of

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<sup>1</sup> All translations from Japanese into English are mine unless otherwise indicated. The Japanese text is given in the corresponding footnote, as here. Japanese original: 私がかねてから沖縄の現実を書きたいと思っていた。In Ōshiro Tatsuhiko 大城立裕, *Kōgen o motomete: sengo 50-nen to watakushi* 光源を求めて：戦後50年と私 (Naha-shi: Okinawa Taimususha, 1997), 165.

<sup>2</sup> Japanese original: じつは、世間の一般読者にも、戦後沖縄社会の特異性のゆえに、それを描いた作品を読みたいという機運は生じていた。ところが、沖縄の現実を小説に形象化することは、容易ではないと思われた。もちろん私の技量の足りなさのせいだが、現実が複雑すぎて、どこから切り取ってよいか分からない、という感じであった。現実が複雑すぎるということは、米軍との共棲というものが、深刻なデメリットばかりではなく、メリットや可笑しい話もあるし、文化ショックをめぐっては、一筋縄ではいかないことが多いからだ。In Ibid.

Okinawa.<sup>3</sup> According to Okamoto, these new circumstances altered Okinawan people's lifestyles and traditional community relationships, creating a sense of anxiety among people about losing their cultural identity.<sup>4</sup> These changes and the subsequent sense of loss of Okinawan identity resulted in raising public interest in what is native to Okinawa.

Postwar Okinawan writers were also confronted with the question of Okinawan identity in the midst of contestations of new and old values. It was in this context that Ōshiro Tatsuhiro's "Meiro" (Maze, 1991) and Nakandakari Hatsu's "Hahatachi onnatachi" (Mothers/Women, 1982) were produced. The former is produced in the 1990s and thus is beyond the general setting of this thesis, which primarily examines the literary texts in the 1970s and 1980s. I have nonetheless selected this text because, as I will discuss later in section two, Ōshiro produced an unpublished text in the late 1960s, which had so many similarities with "Maze" that it could be identified as the precursor thereof.<sup>5</sup> Thus, although "Maze" was published in 1991, it is surmised that Ōshiro was developing his ideas for "Maze" during the 1970s and 1980s as well.

Both "Maze" and "Mothers/Women" address the issue of postwar Okinawan identity in the face of an influx of new ideas, values, and practices by portraying Okinawan women's struggle to find their personal identity. What is particularly notable about these two stories is the link between women's spirituality and their construction of Okinawan postwar identity. Through analyzing "Maze" and "Mothers/Women," I attempt

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<sup>3</sup> Okamoto Keitoku 岡本恵徳, *Gendai bungaku ni miru Okinawa no jigazō* 現代文学にみる沖縄の自画像 (Tōkyō: Kōbunken, 1996), 227.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Goya Minako 呉屋美奈子, "Ōshiro Tatsuhiro mihappyō sakuhin ni tsuite: Okinawa to hondo no kankakuteki sōi ni chakumokushite" 大城立裕未発表作品について：沖縄と本土の感覚的相違に着目して, *Toshokan jōhō media kenkyū* 図書館情報メディア研究 3, no. 1 (September 2005): 44.

to show how the Okinawan religious view of women as spiritual and religious figures inspired Okinawan authors to construct narratives of postwar Okinawan society and Okinawan people's lives therein.

Matsuyo, the protagonist of "Maze," is a young Okinawan woman born to Japanese and American parents. She is also a *yuta*, or traditional shamanic religious practitioners in Okinawa. In "Maze," Ōshiro addresses the centrality of women's spirituality in the construction of Okinawan postwar identity by portraying Matsuyo's pursuit of her personal identity. Because of her beliefs and practices as a *yuta*, Matsuyo is often isolated from others. Overcoming various obstacles, however, Matsuyo confirms her decision to pursue her role as a hearer of voices of ancestors and deities believed to reside in *utaki* (sacred groves) scattered throughout Okinawa.

In "Mothers/Women," women's spirituality is described through the act of recollection by an elderly woman referred to as Grandma Kamado and the transmission of her wartime traumatic memory to Misa, a young Okinawan woman born after World War II. Nakandakari shows how Misa develops her personal identity through interacting with her friends and lover and, more importantly, her mother and Grandma Kamado. The relationship between Misa and Grandma Kamado is especially noteworthy. People do not take Grandma Kamado's words seriously. When Grandma Kamado insisted on protecting her own land, many considered it a sign of insanity. At first Misa also had little understanding about Grandma Kamado. One night, however, Misa witnesses the ghosts of Grandma Kamado's children who appear in Grandma Kamado's dream. Through this almost supernatural experience, Misa comes to realize that Grandma Kamado is still tormented by her traumatic memory of the war. Although Grandma

Kamado is not described as a *yuta* per se, her spirituality is expressed in that she “sees” her children killed in the war.

That Matsuyo in “Maze” and Grandma Kamado in “Mothers/Women” are treated with a mixture of respect and contempt by their fellow Okinawans reminds us that practices and beliefs about *yuta* have caused frictions among Okinawan people century after century. Matthew Allen states,

By situating the role of [*yuta*] shamans within a historical context, it becomes clear that repression of these women has taken place at a number of junctures in Okinawan history, mainly because they were seen as “backward,” “primitive,” or “too” Okinawan. In other words, their primary identity as Okinawans led those in political power to attempt to remove them from being socially acceptable, forcing them underground as the state reinvented itself to suit broader political strategies. Notwithstanding almost four centuries of discrimination and attempted repression, shamans continue to prosper in contemporary society, using makers of Okinawan identity (in particular ancestor worship) to legitimate their roles as therapists and healers.<sup>6</sup>

These private religious practitioners of *yuta* represent what is native to Okinawa. At the same time, they have been marginalized in Okinawa each time the society underwent major transitions. It should be emphasized, however, that it is at such moments of social change that these *yuta* or shamanic women have been needed by the people of Okinawa. By using the figure of a *yuta* and a *yuta*-like figure, Ōshiro and Nakandakari successfully show Okinawan people’s struggle in the midst of the fluctuations of traditional and indigenous values during the postwar period. Matsuyo in “Maze” and Grandma Kamado in “Mothers/Women” both hear the voices on the verge of fading away during the turbulent postwar period of political, economical, and cultural changes and thereby play the role of guardians of Okinawan identity.

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<sup>6</sup> Matthew Allen, “Therapies or Resistance? Yuta, Help-seeking, and Identity in Okinawa,” abstract, *Critical Asian Studies* 34, no. 2 (June 2002): 221.

This thesis is composed of two main sections. The first part concerns *yuta* practices and beliefs in Okinawa. In addition to providing the summary of the indigenous belief system of Okinawa, I will discuss how *yuta* shamanic figures have been treated in Okinawa since the time of the Ryūkyū Kingdom (1429-1879). The first section is followed by my literary analysis of Ōshiro Tatsuhiro's "Maze" and "Mothers/Women" by Nakandakari Hatsu. Both stories are set in postwar Okinawa after its reversion to mainland Japan in 1972. Ōshiro and Nakandakari commonly incorporate beliefs about women's spirituality in Okinawa into their portrayals of post-reversion Okinawa as a place of contestations of new/other and old/indigenous values and ideas. As a conclusion, I will summarize the commonalities between these two stories and discuss the significance of literary representations of women's spirituality in articulating the issue of postwar Okinawan identity.

# CHAPTER 1

## WOMEN IN THE RELIGION OF OKINAWA

It is not uncommon in Okinawan fictions of the 1970s and 1980s that elderly Okinawan women are the main focus. Summarizing all the literary works that either won the New Okinawan Literature Prize or got an honorable mention for the prize between 1975 and 2004, Ōshiro Tatsuhiko points out that the salient feature of the literary works produced in the 1960s and thereafter is that the theme of locality and homeland is commonly depicted through the stories of family.<sup>7</sup> As examples of such stories, Ōshiro lists Tokuda Tomoko's "Shinjō Matsu no tenshi" (Shinjō Matsu's Engel, 1989), Misato Toshinori's "Tsuru bāsan no bāi" (In the Case of Grandma Tsuru, 2000), Hanawa Mai's "Haka" (Grave, 2000), and Kinjō Mayu's "Sennen sōbō" (Thousand Years, 2002). Furthermore, Ōshiro states that Tokuda's "Shinjō Matsu's Engel," Misato's "In the Case of Grandma Tsuru," and Kinjō's "Thousand Years" all depict elderly women's experiences as their motifs.<sup>8</sup>

In the following sections, I attempt to show a connection between highlighted roles of elderly women in many Okinawan postwar literary works and the centrality of women in the Okinawan indigenous belief system. In doing so, I try to explore the ways in which *yuta* practices and beliefs may have given a form for Okinawan writers to describe the challenge of constructing Okinawan postwar identity. I will first present the overall picture of women and religion in Okinawa, which will be followed by discussion

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<sup>7</sup> Ōshiro Tatsuhiko 大城立裕, "Shin Okinawa bungaku' no sanjū" 「新沖縄文学」の三十年, *Okinawa bungei nenkan* 2004 沖縄文芸年鑑 2004 (December 2004): 6.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

concerning the process of becoming *yuta*, their role as mediators between this world and the world of the deities, and the history of the suppression of *yuta*.

### **Official Female Religious Practitioners**

Katsukata-Inafuku Keiko, the author of *Okinawa joseigaku kotohajime* (Gender and Ethnicity in Okinawan Studies, 2006) and the director of the Institute for Ryukyuan and Okinawan Studies at Waseda University, summarizes the centrality of women in religion of Okinawa:

The notable aspect in the discussion of Okinawan women is that the ritual and religious rights are given exclusively to women. Their roles range from praying for the ‘*tōtōmē* (ancestral tablet)’ and ‘*hi nu kan* [(the god of fire)],’ dispensing religious ceremonies for *monchū* [(a group of people belonging to the same family)], and moreover to performing agricultural rituals in villages as female priests. Thus, women play central roles in all ritualistic and religious events, both public and private ones.<sup>9</sup>

In this way, Okinawan women have taken on the religious needs of the members of their family and local communities. Katsukata-Inafuku further states that “Okinawan women themselves are regarded ‘*unai* (sisters) *gami* [(god)],’ possessing *seji* [(spiritual power)].”<sup>10</sup> She continues, “It has been pointed out that this religious superiority, or the

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<sup>9</sup> Japanese original: 沖縄女性を語る上で注目すべき点は、祭祀権・宗教権がもっぱら女性の手にはゆだねられている、ということである。家々の「トートーメー（位牌）」や「火の神」を拝む役目、門中の祭事を執り行う役目、さらには、村々の農耕儀礼の祭祀を担う神官の役目にいたるまで、公私にわたるすべての祭祀・宗教行事が女性中心に行われる。In Katsukata-Inafuku Keiko 勝方＝稲福恵子, *Okinawa joseigaku kotohajime* 沖縄女性学事始 (Tōkyō: Shinjuko shōbo, 2006), 40. In the story “Maze,” the protagonist, Matsuyo, cares about whether there is *hi nu kan* at the hospital. Realizing that there is *no hi nu kan* there, Matsuyo feels the sense of anxiety about her friend who is going to stay at the hospital to cure her disease. For Matsuyo, the fact the hospital does not have the *hi nu kan* seems ominous. For the further discussion of “Maze,” see chapter 2.

<sup>10</sup> Japanese original: とりわけ沖縄女性は、存在そのものが「うない（姉妹）神」であるとされ、霊力をもっているとされる。In Ibid. Many scholars have focused on the Okinawan world view of women’s spirituality.

idea that ‘women have more spiritual power than men do’ is what is remarkable about Okinawan women.”<sup>11</sup>

Okinawan women’s spiritual and religious roles have a long history. According to Katsukata-Inafuku, already in the thirteenth century “‘*unaigami*,’ who conducted rituals, practiced religious rituals for the village communities as ‘*nuru*’ (a prayer).”<sup>12</sup> In the Ryūkyū Kingdom, these women were organized into a hierarchical system under the reign of Shō Shin (1465-1527; ruled 1477-1526). He was the third king of the line of the Second Shō Dynasty (1470-1609) after his father, Shō En (1415-1476; ruled 1469-1476), and Shō En’s younger brother, Shō Sen’i (1430-1477; ruled 1477).<sup>13</sup>

Under Shō Shin’s rule, women with religious responsibilities were organized into four different ranks and were assigned different domains and tasks. First, those who were called *noro* (*nuru*) constituted the bottom line of the hierarchy.<sup>14</sup> These women were located at local areas and were responsible for religious services there. Second, above the rank of *noro* was called *ōamo*. They were called by such names as *ōamo* of Miyako, *ōamo* of Yaeyama, *ōamo* of Naha, to name just a few, and were assigned duties and responsibilities of larger areas compared to those of *noro*. On top of *noro* and *ōamo*, there was another group of women. While *noro* and *ōamo* were assigned regional duties and responsibilities, these higher ranking women were given duties in the central

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<sup>11</sup> Japanese original: この宗教的優位性、すなわち「女性が男性よりも霊力がある」と考えられていることが、沖縄女性の特筆すべき点であるといわれている。In Katsukata-Inafuku, *Okinawa joseigaku kotohajime*, 40.

<sup>12</sup> Japanese original: すでに祭祀をまかされた「うない神」が「ノロ」（祈る人）として村落共同体の宗教的祭事を執り行っていた。In Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Takara Kurayoshi 高良倉吉, *Ryūkyū Ōoku* 琉球王国, Iwanami shinsho shin akabon 261 (Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten, 1993), 58.

<sup>14</sup> In Yaeyama and Miyako regions, they were known as *tsukasa*. In this way, there are many regional variations.



kingdom. According to Takara Kurayoshi, different denominations were given to those women over time. Finally, there was *Kikoe Ōkimi* at the top of the hierarchy. As a custom, this position was bestowed on the king's sisters.<sup>15</sup> For instance, the younger sister of Shō Shin became the first *Kikoe Ōkimi*.<sup>16</sup> As the nation's top-ranking priest, *Kikoe Ōkimi* was responsible for protecting the king and nation and bringing in prosperity.<sup>17</sup>

This organized official system of female religious practitioners in the Ryūkyū Kingdom began to collapse after the kingdom was invaded by the Shimazu family or the Satsuma domain in 1609. As a result, the Kingdom became part of the feudal system of the Tokugawa shogunate, losing its status as an independent kingdom. Katsukata-Inafuku mentions that after the system of female religious practitioners collapsed, the traditional belief system of *kaminchu* (divine beings) continued at a local level.<sup>18</sup>

The traditional local *kaminchu* (divine beings) continued to be part of the local religious systems as *noro* (In the Yaeyama region, they were called '*tsukasa*'). These *kaminchu* were native to the local lives and thus maintained their existence despite the '*yogawari*' [(epoch change)]. The fact that there are still places where the *kaminchu* culture continues still today, maintaining its function, is something we should pay particular attention to in our discussion of Okinawan women.<sup>19</sup>

Katsukata-Inafuku thus draws out our attention to the continuation of the female-centered religious practices in Okinawa. She then refers to Miyagi Eishō's *Okinawa no noro no*

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<sup>15</sup> Katsukata-Inafuku, *Okinawa joseigaku kotohajime*, 39.

<sup>16</sup> Takara, *Ryūkyū Ōoku*, 67.

<sup>17</sup> Katsukata-Inafuku, *Okinawa joseigaku kotohajime*, 39.

<sup>18</sup> The expression, "divine beings" is my own translation of the term, *kaminchu*, which is originally written with two Chinese characters, 神 (god) and 人 (person).

<sup>19</sup> Japanese original: もともと土着のものであったカミンチュは、「世変わり」にもかかわらずもちこたえたわけである。カミンチュが現在まで延々と形象されて機能している地域があるという事実は、沖縄女性を語る上でなによりも特筆すべきことである。In Katsukata-Inafuku, *Okinawa joseigaku kotohajime*, 43-4.

*kenkyū* (A Study of *Noro* in Okinawa, 1979) and states that in his book 192 women are listed as living *noro* and *tsukasa*.

### **Private Female Religious Figures**

In addition to these official female religious figures, there are *yuta* shamanic figures who practice religious services mainly for private affairs. Katamoto Eri, in her article “Prayer of ‘Noro’ and ‘Yuta,’ folklore religionists in Okinawa,” points out that there are regional differences in terms of religious activities by *yuta* and also that there are diverse ways in which these women are called, categorized, and defined.<sup>20</sup>

Acknowledging such diverse characteristics of *yuta*, Katamoto draws upon earlier research on the topic as well as definitions given in *Nihon minzoku daijiten* (Japanese Folklore Dictionary, 2000) and summarizes the differences between *noro* and *yuta* as follows: While *noro* 1) deals with official affairs, 2) takes a priest-like role, 3) makes invocations to the gods, and 4) is associated with the notion of purity, *yuta* 1) deals with private matters, 2) plays shamanistic roles, 3) communicates with the deceased, and thus 4) is associated with the notion of impurity.<sup>21</sup> Let us now turn to look more closely at the significant roles that *yuta* have played in Okinawa.

### **Female Shamanic Figures in Japan**

Female shamanic figures in Japan are not limited to *yuta* in Okinawa. In the Tōhoku region (north-eastern areas), such as Aomori and Iwate prefectures, there are

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<sup>20</sup> Katamoto Eri 片本恵利. “‘Noro’ to ‘Yuta’ no inori ni kansuru ichi kōsatsu” 「ノロ」と「ユタ」の祈りに関する一考察, *Okinawa kokusai daigaku sōgō gaku jutsu kenkyū kiyō* 沖縄国際大学総合学術研究紀要 10 no. 1 (December 2006): 46. In this Master’s thesis project, I have not referred to regional differences *within* Okinawa. It is also beyond the scope of this project to analyze female shamanic figures in nearby areas such as Amami island.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 49.

female shamans called *itako*.<sup>22</sup> While there are male *yuta*, only women can become *itako*.<sup>23</sup> Also different from *yuta*, *itako* are usually blind women.<sup>24</sup> In addition to *yuta* and *itako*, in the Tsugaru region of Aomori prefecture, northern areas of Akita prefecture, and the southern Hokkaidō, there are private female shamanic figures known as *gomiso*.<sup>25</sup> As most *yuta* are women, *gomiso* are also women although there are male *yuta* and *gomiso*.<sup>26</sup> The system of *yuta* in the south-eastern region versus *itako* and *gomiso* in the northern part of Japan show different ways in which a woman becomes a shaman. In the case of the former, it is believed that a woman is chosen by divine spirits to become a *yuta*.<sup>27</sup> In contrast, in the case of the latter, a woman undergoes a certain training to acquire the skill to communicate with divine beings and become *itako* and *gomiso*.<sup>28</sup> In both cases, a woman in the process of becoming a *yuta* or *itako* and *gomiso* receives guidance from senior shamanic women.<sup>29</sup>

### **Becoming *Yuta***

As one might suspect, not all native Okinawan women are *yuta*. It is said that some women are born to be *yuta* and some learn to become *yuta*.<sup>30</sup> The former is popularly called *umari yuta* (a person who was born to be *yuta*) while the latter is known as *narai yuta* (a person who learned to be *yuta*). As for the former, there are certain paths

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<sup>22</sup> Fukuda Ajio 福田アジオ et al., ed., *Nihon minzoku daijiten* 日本民俗大辞典 (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1999- 2000), s.v. “itako.” Here, it is also explained that these women begin to learn under their mentors since they are young.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., s.v. “gomiso.”

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., s.v. “shāmanizumu.”

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., s.v. “yuta.”

that these women usually take to become a full-fledged *yuta*. For instance, they tend to have distinctive experiences from a young age:

*Yuta* candidates often have certain experiences, including being sensitive to things related to the deities, beginning to voice premonitions they have had on people's fate, and frequently having dreams in relation to the deities and thus are rumored as *sejidaka umari* (*sejidaka umare*, or 'born with spiritual power') or as *seidaka umari* (*seidaka umare*, or 'born with higher nature') as they grow up.<sup>31</sup>

At the early stage of becoming *yuta*, those who are considered to be *umari yuta* often experience so-called *kamidāri* (possession by the deity), during which they have dreams and illusions.<sup>32</sup> In particular, they tend to have dreams and illusions involving deities.<sup>33</sup> These experiences are commonly triggered by problems and difficulties occurring to these women.<sup>34</sup> Examples include divorce, failure of business, sickness, to name only a few.<sup>35</sup>

As for the latter category of *yuta*, "In recent years, there are many cases in which those who have no experience of *kamidāri* [...] become trained-type *yuta* through ascetic practices and learning, motivated by the idea that the occupation as *yuta* is economically beneficial."<sup>36</sup>

### **The Role of *Yuta***

General activities of *yuta* as, what Katamoto calls "folklore religionists" for individual families or members of local communities, include transmitting the messages

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<sup>31</sup> Japanese original: ユタ候補者は幼少時から神ごとに敏感で他人の運命を口ばしり、神にかかわる夢をよく見るといった経験をし、周囲からセジダカウマリ（霊高い生まれ）とかセイダカウマリ（性高い生まれ）などと噂されて育つことが多い。In Fukuda et al., ed., *Nihon minzoku daijiten*, s.v. "yuta."

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

from the deities and spirits, making predictions, and praying for people's prosperity and good fortune while dispelling misfortune and driving out evil spirits, and healing people's diseases.<sup>37</sup> While a *yuta* plays a wide range of roles in a given community or for specific families and individuals, the primary activity for which *yuta* is responsible is called *hanji* (judgment), in which *yuta* communicate with supernatural beings. A *yuta* begins her religious service by transmitting her clients' messages to the supernatural figures and passes down their responses to her clients. There are mainly two ways in which *yuta* convey the divine beings' message to their clients.<sup>38</sup> First, *yuta* are possessed by the spirit and convey the message to their clients in the first person. Second, the appearance of the supernatural being becomes visible to *yuta* and their voices are heard by *yuta*, who in return transmit the message to their clients in the third person. In this way, *yuta* takes the role of a mediator between people of this world and the divine beings so that they can communicate with each other.

According to Sakurai Tokutarō, one of the leading scholars of folk religion in general and shamanic figures in Okinawa and other parts of Japan in particular, the activities of *yuta* in postwar Okinawa increased due to the growing demand from people for *yuta* to retrieve messages of their deceased family members.<sup>39</sup> Sakurai contends that many people turned to *yuta* to receive *yuta*'s '*akashi*' (the proof) to identify the place,

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<sup>37</sup> Katsukata-Inafuku, *Okinawa joseigaku kotohajime*, 39; and Fukuda et al., ed., *Nihon minzoku daijiten*, s.v. "yuta."

<sup>38</sup> Fukuda et al., *Nihon minzoku daijiten*, s.v. "shāmanizumu." Here, it is also explained that there are two ways for a shamanic figure to communicate with the deities and spiritual beings: 1) ecstasy and 2) possession. The latter is observable among *yuta*.

<sup>39</sup> Sakurai Tokutarō 桜井徳太郎, "Okinawa shamanizumu to genten: nujifā to reikonkan" 沖縄シャマニズムと原点 - ヌジファと霊魂観 -, in *Okinawagaku no kadai* 沖縄学の課題, Sōsho waga Okinawa 5, ed. Tanigawa Ken'ichi 谷川健一 (Tōkyō: Mukujisha, 1972), 47-8.

time, and conditions of their family members' deaths.<sup>40</sup> According to Sakurai, rather than believing in information provided by the military, many people

trusted the *hanji* [...] by *yuta*, who had greatly influenced the religious activities of Okinawan people, and acted in accordance with the *yuta*'s oral narratives (*yuta guchi*) and their *ushimeshi* (*oshimeshi* [(revelation)]).<sup>41</sup>

In this way, the people of Okinawa have counted on *yuta* in order to find solutions for the problems that they face at various stages of their lives. *Yuta*'s words had a strong impact on those who come to *yuta* for their spiritual consultation.

Notably, the *yuta*'s role as a counselor has been pointed out by scholars in various fields, including psychology. For instance, in his 1995 article, "Okinawa no minkan fusha 'yuta' no kaunseringu kinō no ichi kenkyū: shūkyōteki mensetsu bamen no bunseki kara" (A Study of the Counseling Function of Okinawan Shaman 'Yuta': From an Analysis of Interviews Conducted in a Religious Situation), Kira Yasuyuki examines dialogues between *yuta* and her clients, relating the activities of *yuta* to counseling practices in the field of clinical psychology. According to Kira, such scholars as Ōhashi Hideshi, Ikegami Yoshimasa, and Yohena Kenji also acknowledge *yuta*'s counseling roles.

### **Yuta: Respected or Rejected?**

As I have examined thus far, *yuta* have acted in close proximity to the people of Okinawa. At the same time, however, *yuta* have met strong criticisms and suppression by

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<sup>40</sup> Sakurai, "Okinawa shamanizumu to genten: nujifā to reikonkan," 47.

<sup>41</sup> Japanese original: 沖縄人の宗教生活に大きな影響を与えてきたユタのハンジ（啓示や判断）を信用し、ユタの口語り（ユタグチ）やウシメシ（御示し）に応じて行動をとる。 In Ibid., 48. Okinawan literary works commonly portray the people of Okinawa relying on *yuta* when there are troubles. For instance, Shiraishi Yayoi's "Meishin" (Strayed Mind, 1986) portrays the process in which the protagonist becomes a *yuta koyā* (those who buy *yuta*'s religious services).

different agents at different junctures in Okinawan history.<sup>42</sup> Their activities were kept under close guard especially at a turbulent time period in which the Ryūkyū Kingdom/Okinawa was under the influence of outsiders and thereby the society was undergoing various social changes.<sup>43</sup> Reflecting the long history of suppression against *yuta* in Okinawa, “the frequently used term, ‘*yuta*,’ has a strong sense of insult. Therefore, many private female shamanic figures call themselves ‘*munushiri*’ (*monoshiri* [(a well-informed person)] or ‘*kaminchu*’ (*shinjin* [(a god-like person)]).”<sup>44</sup> As we shall see in the following section, continuous regulations against *yuta* should be discussed in terms of the Ryūkyū Kingdom and Okinawa’s position vis-à-vis mainland Japan.<sup>45</sup>

According to Ōhashi Hideshi, there were six critical occasions in which the suppression of *yuta* was in particular tightened.<sup>46</sup> In all of these six cases, *yuta* were criticized for 1) misleading the populace, 2) encouraging people’s high expenditure on *yuta*’s religious services, and 3) being irrational.<sup>47</sup> Despite these commonalities, however, each case has its own unique characteristics and should be examined in its own light. First, let us explore the regulation of *yuta* during the time of the Ryūkyū Kingdom.

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<sup>42</sup> Ōhashi Hideshi 大橋英寿, “Okinawa shāmanizumu no rekishi: yuta kin’atsu no shosō to haikai” 沖縄シャーマニズムの歴史 - ユタ禁圧の諸相と背景 -, *Tōhoku Daigaku Bungakubu kenkyū nenpō* 東北大学文学部研究年報 32 (1982): 41-106. For the discussion of *yuta* regulations, I rely mainly on Ōhashi’s research.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>44</sup> Japanese original: しばしば使われる「ユタ」という言葉には、かなり強い侮蔑の響きがある。だからこうした宗教者の多くは、自分たち自身を「ムヌシリ（物知り）」とか「カミンチュ（神人）」という言葉でよぶことが多い。In Ikegami Yoshimasa 池上良正, *Minzoku shūkyō to sukui: Tsugaru, Okinawa no minkan fusha* 民俗宗教と救い：津軽・沖縄の民間巫者, *Nihon bunka no kokoro sono uchi to soto* (Kyōto-shi: Tankōsha, 1992), 16.

<sup>45</sup> Ōhashi, “Okinawa shāmanizumu no rekishi,” 63. .

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 98-9.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

## The Suppression of *Yuta* in the Ryūkyū Kingdom

As mentioned earlier, the official system of female religious practitioners was established in the Ryūkyū Kingdom under Shō Shin's rule. Sakurai states,

Since the government of the Ryūkyū Kingdom made particular attempts to thoroughly control religious activities of the people of the kingdom islands and establish the psychological and ideological foundation of the system of the centralized government and enforced the official organization of female shamanic figures, the shamanic figure of *yuta*, who dealt with private religious matters, resulted in meeting extreme oppressive measures.<sup>48</sup>

Under such circumstances,

Although both [*norō* and *yuta*] are female religious practitioners, they are treated in an opposite manner; one [*norō*] becomes the part of the system and were protected while the other [*yuta*] was excluded and oppressed.<sup>49</sup>

It is commonly acknowledged that Shō Shōken (1617-1675), a politician of the Ryūkyū Kingdom, was the first to attempt officially to ban the activities of *yuta*.<sup>50</sup> According to Ōhashi, Shō Shōken tried to prohibit the activities of *yuta* because he was afraid that “beliefs about *yuta* among the populace outside the state system would lead to the collapse thereof.”<sup>51</sup>

Shō Shōken was especially concerned with the sense of anxiety among the people after the Satsuma invasion in 1609.<sup>52</sup> From the perspective of the state officials, those

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<sup>48</sup> Japanese original: ことに琉球王府が、諸島内の宗教統制を徹底させ、中央集権的体制の効果を精神的・思想的側面から確立しようと試み、官制的祝女組織を強制して以来、民間の呪術的信仰を担ったシャーマンのユタは、極端に弾圧されるにいたった。In Sakurai Tokutarō 桜井徳太郎, *Okinawa no shamanizumu: minkan fujo no seitai to kinō* 沖縄のシャマニズム：民間巫女の生態と機能 (Tōkyō: Kōbundō, 1973), 5.

<sup>49</sup> Ōhashi, “Okinawa shāmanizumu no rekishi,” 100.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 101.

<sup>51</sup> Japanese original: 体制のそとでの民衆のユタ信仰が体制崩壊につながる。In Ibid., 98.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 96.



private female shamanic figures were threatening to the firm establishment of the state control as they would spread superstitious beliefs among the people. To put it in another way, it was believed that the words and deeds of these private female religious practitioners would mislead the populace.<sup>53</sup> A similar principle was promoted during the later stage of the Second Shō Dynasty between 1609 and 1879 when another influential politician at that time, Saion (1682-1761), opposed the activities of *yuta*. The policy against *yuta* was implemented out of Saion's concerns, which were similar to those of Shō Shōken; namely, *yuta*'s negative influence on the maintenance of the state order.<sup>54</sup> According to Ōhashi's categorization, Saion's was the second major suppression of *yuta*.<sup>55</sup>

### **The Assimilation of Okinawa and *Yuta* Regulations**

The suppression of *yuta* continued after the 1879 'Ryūkyū *shobun*' (Ryūkyū disposal), in which the Ryūkyū *han* (Ryūkyū domain) was abolished and the Ryūkyū Islands were officially annexed to Japan as Okinawa prefecture. As noted earlier, the Meiji government abolished the official system of priestess-hood. The government also prohibited the activities of *yuta* because it was believed that *yuta* were spreading groundless rumors and thereby misleading people.<sup>56</sup>

In examining the suppression of *yuta* since the 1879 Ryūkyū disposal within the context of the relationship between mainland Japan and Okinawa, we need to consider

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<sup>53</sup> Ōhashi, "Okinawa shāmanizumu no rekishi," 98 and 100-1.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>55</sup> Inafuku Mikiko 稲福みき子, "Minzoku shinkō to shokunōshatachi" 民間信仰と職能者たち, in *Naha onna no ashiato (zen-kindai hen)* なは・女のあしあと (前近代編), ed. Naha-shi Sōmubu Joseishitsu 那覇市総務部女性室 (Naha-shi: Ryūkyū Shinpōsha Jigyōkyoku Shuppanbu, 2001), 246-61; and Ikegami, *Minzoku shūkyō to sukui*, 18.

<sup>56</sup> Ōhashi, "Okinawa shāmanizumu no rekishi," 96.

the fact that the Japanese government at that time disdained many of the Okinawan customs as “barbaric.”<sup>57</sup> Various attempts were made to “Japanize” Okinawan social and cultural practices in the name of “civilizing” the people of Okinawa.<sup>58</sup> As seen in the measures taken by the politicians of the Ryūkyū Kingdom, the Japanese government attempted to control the activities of private religious practitioners including *yuta* by incorporating them into the Japanese religious systems.<sup>59</sup>

Notably, the assimilation of Okinawa into mainland Japan was supported by Japanese and Okinawans alike although their perspectives were not completely identical.<sup>60</sup> As for a medium to spread the idea of supporting the assimilation in Okinawa, Ōhashi contends that “it was nowhere but newspapers that the assimilation of Okinawa into Japan was most strongly advocated and promoted during the Meiji and Taishō periods.”<sup>61</sup> More specifically, the *Ryūkyū Shinpō*, which was first published in 1893 and has been circulated as one of the major newspapers in Okinawa since then, played a significant role in advocating and spreading the idea of assimilation of Okinawa to Japan.<sup>62</sup> In relation to my discussion of the regulation of *yuta*, let us now take a look at the fact that the issue of “backwardness” of Okinawan women was brought up by the advocates of the assimilation of Okinawa. For instance, Ōta Chōfu (1865-1938), the

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<sup>57</sup> Sakurai, *Okinawa no shamanizumu*, 6.

<sup>58</sup> Oguma Eiji 小熊英二. “*Nihonjin*” no kyōkai: *Okinawa, Ainu, Taiwan, Chōsen, shokuminchi shihai kara fukki undō made* <日本人>の境界：沖縄・アイヌ・台湾・朝鮮植民地支配から復帰運動まで (Tōkyō: Shin’yōsha, 1998), 35-49.

<sup>59</sup> Sakurai, *Okinawa no shamanizumu*, 6.

<sup>60</sup> Oguma, “*Nihonjin*” no kyōkai, 280-319.

<sup>61</sup> Japanese original: 明治から大正にかけて、沖縄の日本への同化をもっとも強く主張し、推進したものは新聞にほかならない. In Ōhashi, “Okinawa shamanizumu no rekishi,” 83.

<sup>62</sup> Oguma, “*Nihonjin*” no kyōkai, 281.

editor in chief of the *Ryūkyū Shinpō* since 1913, asserted the importance of educating Okinawan women.<sup>63</sup> For Ōta, the most urgent issue to be addressed was the low status of women in Okinawa.<sup>64</sup>

There were other male Okinawan thinkers who highlighted the importance of education for women. A prominent example is Iha Fuyū (1876-1947), who was another major thinker at that time and is popularly known as “the father of Okinawaology.” As pointed out earlier, he emphasized the importance of educating women.<sup>65</sup> He wrote articles and books on women in Okinawa, including the influential text, *Okinawa joseishishi* (Okinawan Women’s History, 1912).<sup>66</sup> Before moving on to the discussion of Iha’s ideas about Okinawan women for the purpose of civilizing Okinawa, let us first explore Iha’s concept of the location of Okinawa vis-à-vis mainland Japan.

Analyzing Iha’s attempt at constructing the concept of Okinawan identity, Oguma Eiji states that Iha advocated the ideas of the people of Okinawa and mainland Japan having the same origin (‘*dōso*,’ or ‘the same ancestry’) and, at the same time, the uniqueness of Okinawan people as ‘*Ryūkyū minzoku*’ (The Rykyuan people). According to Oguma,

Originally, the term, ‘*dōso*,’ was an adjective used by the Japanese to define Okinawan and Korean people as being both ‘Japanese’ and non- ‘Japanese’ based

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<sup>63</sup> Oguma, “*Nihonjin*” *no kyōkai*, 282-3.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 282.

<sup>65</sup> Oguma, “*Nihonjin*” *no kyōkai*, 309-16; and Katsukata-Inafuku, *Okinawa joseigaku kotohajime*, 51-61.

<sup>66</sup> Katsukata-Inafuku states that Yanagita Kunio was influenced by Iha in writing his *Imo no Chikara* in 1940. In Katsukata-Inafuku, *Okinawa joseigaku kotohajime*, 60. According to Kawahashi Noriko, “The spiritual power of women came to attention in the first place with the publication of *Imo no chikara* (Women’s Power) in 1940 by Yanagita Kunio, the founding father of Japanese folklore studies.” In Noriko Kawahashi, “Gender Issues in Japanese Religion,” in *Nanzan Guide to Japanese Religions*, ed. Paul L. Swanson and Clark Chilson (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i, 2006), 326.

on the Japanese people's attempt to assimilate and at the same time discriminate Okinawans and Koreans. Iha, however, used the term as a word referring to a situation of both being equal to the 'Japanese' and simultaneously having a unique identity that is different from the 'Japanese.'<sup>67</sup>

Thus, Iha attempted to establish "the image of pluralistic 'Japanese'"<sup>68</sup> by highlighting the uniqueness of the Ryukyuan people, who have the same origin as the Japanese people.

It is notable that Iha both did and did not base his argument on the uniqueness of the people of Okinawa. On one hand, Iha argued that Okinawan women had to be more civilized to become like women of other societies, who were, in his view, enjoying the higher status.<sup>69</sup> In this regard, Oguma states, "While Iha generally valued Okinawan 'unique identity,' he had a strong tendency to advocate 'civilization [of Okinawa]' especially when it came to the issue of women."<sup>70</sup> According to Oguma, Iha's negative attitude against *yuta* practices epitomizes this tendency.<sup>71</sup> In other words, in accordance with the dominant view at that time, Iha advocated the abolition of "barbaric" *yuta* practices.<sup>72</sup>

Analyzing the articles of the *Ryūkyū Shinpō*, Ōhashi states that at that time

Cultural originality and particularity were equated with cultural anachronism and the assimilation to Japan was identified as the modernization process. The newspaper's role and mission were to strongly promote the modernization and assimilation. Those who did not act in accordance with this policy were to be

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<sup>67</sup> Japanese original: もともと「同祖」とは、日本側が沖縄や朝鮮などを同化しながら差別するために、「日本人」であって「日本人」でないものとして彼らを位置づけた形容であった。だが伊波はそれを、「日本人」と平等になりながら「日本人」と異なる個性をもつ状態を指す言葉として使用したのである。In Oguma, "*Nihonjin*" *no kyōkai*, 297.

<sup>68</sup> Japanese original: 多元的な「日本人」像。In *Ibid.*, 298-9.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 311.

<sup>70</sup> Japanese original: 伊波は一般的には沖縄の「個性」を重んじたが、こと女性の問題となると、「文明化」を説く傾向がつよく出た。In *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 312.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

enlightened and furthermore, those who deviate from it were to be revealed and criticized. In this context *yuta*'s activities were condemned as the 'strange customs' to be abolished.<sup>73</sup>

According to Ōhashi, the *Ryūkyū Shinpō* began to publish articles that criticized *yuta* since 1898.<sup>74</sup> *Yuta* practices were regarded as "the symbol of vulgar customs"<sup>75</sup> and they were "the main cause of obstruction to Okinawa's modernization and assimilation to Japan."<sup>76</sup>

In this way, rejection of *yuta* was the dominant attitude at that time. What was notable about Iha was that his support for the uniqueness of Okinawan people was not extended to the unique practice of *yuta*. Iha emphasized and highly evaluated certain aspects of women's unique roles in the folk religion of Okinawa in order to encourage Okinawan women to actively educate themselves.<sup>77</sup> According to Katsukata-Inafuku, while Iha condemned the beliefs about *yuta*, he supported education for women on the basis that women played central roles in the Okinawan indigenous belief system:

Iha found it necessary to provide higher education [for women] in order to raise women's awareness and promote modernization. He attempted to prepare a new narrative to inspire Okinawan women by excavating the old layers of the Ryūkyū [Kingdom]. The fact that Okinawa preserved the worldly unique system of rituals, in which women took central roles, and that women had spiritual superiority were ideal materials to reclaim Okinawan women's subjectivity. In order to modernize "conservative" women, who were engaged in the indigenous folk religion, albeit

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<sup>73</sup> Japanese original: 文化の独自性・特殊性を文化の遅延と同一視し、日本への同化がすなわち近代化であるとしたのである。新聞の役割・使命はこの近代化・同化を強力に推進することであり、これに同調しない者を啓蒙し、さらに逸脱する者は暴き非難する、その一環として取去るべき「異種異様の習俗」であるユタがあった。In Ōhashi, "Okinawa shāmanizumu no rekishi," 83. Ōhashi cites actual newspaper articles in his paper.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>75</sup> Japanese original: 陋習のシンボル。In Ibid., 71.

<sup>76</sup> Japanese original: 沖縄の近代化、日本への同化を妨げる元凶。In Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Katsukata-Inafuku, *Okinawa joseigaku kotohajime*, 51-61.

it seemed contradictory, [Iha] focused on the indigenous premodernity [of Okinawa].<sup>78</sup>

Previously, I have examined the official priestess-hood of the Ryūkyū Kingdom. I have also discussed the differences between official and private female religious practitioners. According to Katsukata-Inafuku, Iha, in his analysis of women's central role in the field of religious rituals, credited only the official kind of female priests: "for Fuyū, the Ryukyuan folk religion meant the shamanism of the *Kikoe Ōkimi* and *noro*, not that of *yuta*."<sup>79</sup> Katsukata-Inafuku continues as follows: "To put it in an extreme, this [(Iha's rejection of *yuta*)] was in a way denying what was Ryukyuan and its unique language and culture."<sup>80</sup>

To summarize, Iha supported the idea of preserving Okinawan people's unique identity while emphasizing that Okinawa is a part of Japan. At the same time, he asserted that certain aspects of Okinawa, in particular the lack of education among Okinawan women, needed to be reformed. As evidence of Okinawan women's active social roles, Iha highlighted the official shamanic figures of the Ryūkyū Kingdom, such as the *Kikoe Ōkimi* and *noro*, while rejecting *yuta* beliefs and customs as "barbaric customs." Iha's

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<sup>78</sup> Japanese original: 沖縄女性の意識改革をすすめ、近代化をうながすためにも、高等教育の必要性を感じた普猷は、琉球の古層を掘り起こして、沖縄女性を鼓舞するための新しい物語を用意しようとしたわけである。世界的にも珍しい女性中心の祭祀組織が沖縄に残っているという事実や、女性の霊的優位性は、沖縄女性の主体性を取り戻させるためにはまたとない素材だった。土着の民族宗教に従事している「保守的」な女性たちを近代化させるために、矛盾しているようだが、その土着的前近代性に注目したことになる。In Katsukata-Inafuku, *Okinawa joseigaku kotohajime*, 52.

<sup>79</sup> Japanese original: (前略) 普猷にとって琉球固有の宗教とは、聞得大君やノロのシャーマニズムであり、ユタのシャーマニズムではなかったのである。In *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>80</sup> Japanese original: 極論すれば、これは琉球的なものの否定であり、固有の言語・文化への否定になりかねない。In *Ibid.*

rejection of *yuta* does not, however, mean his lack of academic and personal interest in *yuta*. Academically, Iha made a large contribution to the study of *yuta*. Ōhashi evaluates that Iha's paper, "Yuta no rekishiteki kenkyū" (The Historical Analysis of *Yuta*, 1913), was the first and only comprehensive study of the history of Okinawan shamanism and that it paved the way for the further study of *yuta*.<sup>81</sup> Ōhashi states that the paper is "an irreplaceable work," covering various topics and issues about *yuta*.<sup>82</sup> On a personal level, Iha had a mother who committed herself to *yuta*. Like many other women who became *yuta* themselves or began to rely on them as they suffered from their personal problems, his mother's inclination toward *yuta* started since Iha seriously suffered from a disease when he was little and as her husband began to have relationships with other women.<sup>83</sup> Oguma states on behalf of Iha that "his mother's devotion toward *yuta* was [...] nothing but a tragedy created due to a family collapse and lack of education for women."<sup>84</sup> In the end, as I have discussed so far, Iha participated in the dominant discourse against *yuta*.

### **The Subjugation of *Yuta* during the Taishō Period**

During the Taishō period, the state authority began to take more coercive measures, which included arresting *yuta* when they were regarded as acting against the public morals.<sup>85</sup> These measures are popularly referred to as '*yuta seibatsu*,' or 'the

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<sup>81</sup> Ōhashi, "Okinawa shāmanizumu no rekishi," 69 and 101. Here, Ōhashi states that Iha's paper on *yuta* was published in the *Ryūkyū Shinpō*.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 101.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 312.

<sup>84</sup> Japanese original: 母親のユタ信仰は、（中略）家庭崩壊と女子教育の不足に起因する悲劇にほかならなかった。In Oguma, "*Nihonjin*" no kyōkai, 312.

<sup>85</sup> Furuzuka Tatsuo 古塚達朗, "Yuta bokumetsu undō" ユタ撲滅運動, in *Naha onna no ashiato (kindai hen)* なは・女のあしあと（近代編）, ed. Naha-shi Sōmubu Joseishitsu 那覇市総務部女性室 and Naha Joseishi Henshū linkai 那覇女性史編集委員会 (Tōkyō: Domesu Shuppan, 1998), 345-8.

subjugation of *yuta*.’ This subjugation of *yuta* began with the arrest of a *yuta* in 1913 after a fire broke out in Naha. In the midst of the confusion and fear due to the fire, a *yuta* was accused of further fanning people’s sense of anxiety with her words. Since then, there was a series of crackdowns on *yuta* by the police. Newspapers’ anti-*yuta* campaigns also continued until at least 1917.<sup>86</sup>

It is noteworthy that the subjugation of *yuta* was related to the issue of frequent draft evasion at that time in Okinawa. It was in 1898 that the draft system was introduced in Okinawa. The practice did not, however, take root in Okinawan society easily as there were a number of Okinawan draft dodgers.<sup>87</sup> Okinawan women took part in this move by demonstrating their “silent act of resistance” by visiting prayer spots in the hope that their husbands and sons would not pass the draft examination.<sup>88</sup> It was in this context that *yuta* were accused of further encouraging family members, especially women, to take positions against state policies.<sup>89</sup> *Yuta* were considered as serious hindrance to the state’s attempt at making the imperial subjects compliant; in this case, imperial mothers and wives, who would be willing to give up their sons and husbands for their nation’s war

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<sup>86</sup> Ōhashi, “Okinawa shāmanizumu no rekishi,” 72. According to Ōhashi, the newspaper firm cooperated with the police toward the further crackdown of *yuta*. In this sense, the newspapers played significant roles in the regulation of *yuta* during the Taishō period.

<sup>87</sup> Kindō Kenichirō 近藤健一郎, “Okinawa ni okeru chōheirei shikō to kyōiku” 沖縄における徴兵令施行と教育, *Hokkaidō Daigaku Kyōiku Gakubu Kiyō* 北海道大学教育学部紀要 64 (1994): 10; Miyagi Harumi 宮城晴美, “‘Gunkoku no haha’ no tanjō” 「軍国の母」の誕生, in *Naha onna no ashiato (kindai hen)* なは・女のあしあと (近代編), ed. Naha-shi Sōmubu Joseishitsu 那覇市総務部女性室 and Naha Joseishi Henshū Iinkai 那覇女性史編集委員会 (Tōkyō: Domesu Shuppan, 1998), 402-3; Ōhashi, “Okinawa shāmanizumu no rekishi,” 70-1 and 84.

<sup>88</sup> Miyagi, “‘Gunkoku no haha’ no tanjō,” 402-3.

<sup>89</sup> Ōhashi, “Okinawa shāmanizumu no rekishi,” 70-1. According to Ōhashi, by 1915, those who were brought charges of avoiding the draft duty amounted to more than seven hundred and seventy four.



effort. As we shall see in the following sections, the view of *yuta* as “anti-state elements” was further emphasized during the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>90</sup>

### ***Yuta* in Wartime Okinawa**

As Okinawa took part in the Japanese wartime effort, the activities of *yuta* were against sharply criticized by the state authorities and the control against *yuta* was again tightened during the Shōwa period. At that time, large-scale regulations of *yuta* were conducted by the *Tokubetsu Kōtō Keisatsu* (Special Higher Police). This is popularly referred to as ‘*yuta gari*’ (the *yuta* hunt). *Yuta gari* during the 1930s and 1940s was promoted by the Japanese imperial government along with tightened thought control. According to Ōhashi,

*Yuta gari* took place against the backdrop of the government’s wartime policies of the control of religious activities, unification of public opinions, and that of information. It is particularly notable that *yuta* activities were banned as a part of the government’s religious policies and information control.<sup>91</sup>

The imperial government’s attempt to control people’s religious activities both in mainland Japan and Okinawa included the establishment and circulation of the ideology of State Shinto and the abolition of new religions.

Various attempts of thought control were made since the beginning of the 1920s in Okinawa.<sup>92</sup> In promoting the ideology of State Shinto in Okinawa, and thereby advancing the project of making Okinawan people imperial subjects, however, the authorities had to deal with the indigenous belief system of Okinawa. According to Torigoe Kenzaburō, the ritual of *utaki* and that of “*hi nu kan no ton*” (the altar for the god

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<sup>90</sup> Ōhashi, “Okinawa shāmanizumu no rekishi,” 65.

<sup>91</sup> Japanese original: 「ユタ狩り」の背景には、戦時体制下における政府の宗教統制、世論統一、情報の一元化政策がある。とりわけ宗教政策・情報統制の一環としてユタが禁圧された点に特徴がある。In *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>92</sup> Furuzuka, “Yuta bokumetsu undō,” 347.

of the fire) located at the house of each village community's *nīya* (or *nīdukuru*; the progenitor family of the community) and that of regional priestess consisted of *Amushirare* (priests of the higher rank than *noro*) and *noro* were two major religious activities since the time of the Ryūkyū Kingdom.<sup>93</sup> This does not mean, however, that religions other than these indigenous beliefs and rituals did not exist in the Ryūkyū Islands. For instance, a number of Buddhist temples were built since the earliest record of the Gokurakuji Temple in the thirteenth century.<sup>94</sup> According to Torigoe, these temples, built during the time of the Ryūkyū Kingdom, can be categorized as either Rinzai or Shingon temples.<sup>95</sup> As for the latter, eight temples were registered as official temples and they were under the Kingdom's financial control.<sup>96</sup> What is notable about these officially acknowledged temples of the Shingon school was that a shrine was attached to each temple originally as shrines dedicated to the tutelary deity of the surrounding areas of each temple.<sup>97</sup> These eight shrines were popularly referred to as the Ryūkyū *hassha* (Ryukyuan eight shrines).<sup>98</sup> The priests of these eight shrines were also given the financial support from the Kingdom.<sup>99</sup> According to Ōhashi, these shrines were used to pray for the safety of the Kingdom's tributary ships to China and mainland

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<sup>93</sup> Torigoe Kenzaburō 鳥越憲三郎, "Okinawa no ten'nōsei" 沖縄の天皇制, in *Okinawagaku no kadai* 沖縄学の課題, Sōsho waga Okinawa 5, ed. Tanigawa Ken'ichi 谷川健一 (Tōkyō: Mokujisha, 1972), 326. According to Katsukata-Inafuku, there were about three-hundred *Amushirae*. These regional female religious practitioners were organized in a hierarchical manner. There were three main *Amushirae* on top of the hierarchy and the rest are organized into three different groups. In Katsukata-Inafuku, *Okinawa joseigaku kotohajime*, 41.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 327.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 327-8.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 327.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

Japan.<sup>100</sup> Overall, these shrines were primarily for the royal family of the Ryūkyū Kingdom while the ordinary people were dedicated to *utaki*.<sup>101</sup>

As the Ryūkyū Kingdom was formally annexed to Japan in 1879, the authorities attempted to integrate these shrines in Okinawa into the Japanese system of State Shinto. Among the above-mentioned eight shrines, Naminoue *gū* (Naminoue shrine) was made into a *kanpei shōsha* (a lower-ranking Imperial shrine) in 1890 while the other seven remained unranked shrines.<sup>102</sup> In the following years, a few other shrines were established in addition to these eight shrines.<sup>103</sup> Most of these shrines were, however, rarely visited by the populace and became dilapidated because they were not properly maintained and taken care of.<sup>104</sup> As the state's war effort escalated during the late 1930s, when the Japanese imperial government promoted a mobilization movement known as *Kokumin Seishin Sōdōin Undō* (National Spiritual Mobilization Movement), the plan for rehabilitating these Okinawan shrines was implemented in 1939 in an attempt to raise the morale of the people.<sup>105</sup> Yet this plan was far from successful:

due to the lack of the budget of the Okinawan government and that of people's support, only Hachiman *gū* (Hachiman shrine) was rehabilitated. Yet, the newly constructed shrine was rarely visited by people. The People of Okinawa were detached from the shrine belief system.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Ōhashi, "Okinawa no shāmanizumu no rekishi," 67. According to Ōhashi, these shrines called Ryūkyū *hassha* were abandoned after the Ryūkyū kingdom collapsed.

<sup>101</sup> Torigoe, "Okinawa no ten'nōsei," 334.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 329-35.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 337-8.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 339.

<sup>106</sup> Japanese original: (前略) 県予算の貧弱と、民衆の支援がないために、わずかに八幡宮の一社を再建するだけで終わったのであった。しかし再建された八幡宮の新しい社殿に対しても、ほとんど参詣者はなかった。沖縄の神社信仰は、民衆から遊離していたのである。 In Ibid., 340.

Thus, for the people of Okinawa, the *utaki* beliefs and practices were more important than visiting these Shinto shrines.

The state authorities were aware of the fact that the people of Okinawa had paid more homage toward *utaki*. Because of this, *utaki* were also targeted as a part of the integration of the Okinawan indigenous religion into State Shinto. For instance, *torii* (the gateway to the shrine) were integrated into *utaki*.<sup>107</sup>

Torigoe himself took part in the project of reforming Okinawan religious practices. He focused on the function of *utaki*. His plan was based on his idea that the sacred spaces of *utaki* were “the original form of Shinto shrines.”<sup>108</sup> The following is the summary of a lecture that Torigoe gave to the government personnel in Tokyo on *utaki* in Okinawa as well as his plan about how to reform them:

As for the issue of *utaki*, I explained [to those who came to the lecture] that although there was no *shaden* [(shrine buildings)] or *torii* [in *utaki*] and thus they [(*utaki*)] looked very primitive, they [(*utaki*)] were in fact the original form of Shinto shrines. Taking Mt. Mimuro and Mt. Kamnabi as examples, [I explained that] they [(*utaki*)] were essentially identical to Shinto shrines. [I also said that] it is therefore wrong to see them [(*utaki*)] as those of heretics and I expressed my hope that [the issue of *utaki*] would be discussed on the premise that they [(*utaki*)] are Shinto shrines.<sup>109</sup>

For Torigoe, *utaki* should be identified as “a religious form remaining at the stage of the primitive belief system even though they [(*utaki*)] are essentially the same as Shinto

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<sup>107</sup> Ōhashi, “Okinawa no shāmanizumu no rekishi,” 66-7; and Furuzuka, “Yuta bokumetsu undō,” 347. In Japanese shrines, the areas beyond the *trii* are usually considered to be sacred spaces.

<sup>108</sup> Japanese original: 神社の原初的形態. In Torigoe, “Okinawa no ten’nōsei,” 334.

<sup>109</sup> Japanese original: 問題の御嶽については、社殿も鳥居もなく非常に原始的にみえるが、実は神社の原初的形態であり、三室山・神奈備山を例示して、本質的には神社と同一であることを述べた。そのためこれを異教徒のものとみるのは間違いで、神社であるという前提のもとに考慮してほしいこと。In Ibid., 347.

shrines.”<sup>110</sup> Against the idea of “preserving [*utaki*] as living museums,”<sup>111</sup> Torigoe asserted,

Since [the people of Okinawa were] the fellow Japanese, unless all the [Okinawan] customs and practices were to be elevated to the level of other prefectures, there would be no happiness for the Okinawans [...] I was thinking about how to reform [*utaki*] from the standpoint of being the same people [as the people of Okinawa].<sup>112</sup>

Torigoe was also aware that *utaki* practices and beliefs inhibited the people of Okinawa to be united toward the state’s war effort: “either for seeing off the soldiers to be dispatched or for praying for the victory [of the Japanese nation] in the war, there was no way for all the villagers to visit one specific *utaki*.”<sup>113</sup> People visited *utaki* in their own communities. Therefore, Torigoe’s *utaki* reform included a proposal that all *utaki* in a village be integrated into a unified official shrine in each village, without destroying the individual *utaki*, and all villagers be registered as the parishioners of the newly established shrines.”<sup>114</sup> In the end, Torigoe’s proposal was approved. However, as the war situation in Okinawa grew more serious, the reform was not actually put into practice.<sup>115</sup> Thus, other than the placement of *torii*, little change was added to Okinawan people’s *utaki* practices and beliefs. During the Battle of Okinawa, however, many *utaki*

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<sup>110</sup> Japanese original: 神社とは本質的に同じであっても、原始信仰の段階にとどまっている宗教形態。In Torigoe, “Okinawa no ten’nōsei,” 345.

<sup>111</sup> Japanese original: 生きた博物館として存続させること。In Ibid. The issue of *utaki* becoming more like “museum” is currently an issue in Okinawa.

<sup>112</sup> Japanese original: 同じ日本人であるかぎり、すべての風俗習慣を他府県並みに引き上げなければ、沖縄県民の幸福はない。（中略）私は同一民族として如何に改革するかを考えたのである。In Ibid. I translated the term “*minzoku*” into an English word “people.” The English term “nation” will be an alternative to “people.”

<sup>113</sup> Japanese original: そのため出兵兵士の見送りや戦勝祈願にしても、村びと全員が或る特定の御嶽に参拝して行うことができなかった。In Ibid., 341.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 347.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 347-52.

were destroyed, and furthermore, the devastation of *utaki* continued during the successive postwar period.

As seen in the case of *utaki*, the task of replacing the Okinawan folk religious practices with the ideology of State Shinto was not without difficulties. In a similar manner, the state authorities were confronted with the issue of *yuta*, for *yuta* practices survived despite continuous suppressions. What is more, the so-called new religions were to be eradicated in order to further implement the policy of thought control.

As for the suppression of new religions, Trevor Astley states,

The problem that the authorities encountered with the New Religions escalated after the First World War and throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the numerous cases of police investigations against them bearing testimony to this. The Peace Preservation Law [...] of 1925, whose primary intended target was actually socialism, was also implemented in respect to new religious groups on the pretext of countering ‘dangerous thoughts’ – Ōmoto as early as 1921 and then again in 1935 and Honmichi [...] in 1938 providing us with examples of such groups targeted by the authorities for suppression.<sup>116</sup>

It seems that the same measure was taken in Okinawa. According to Ōhashi’s article, the title of a 1936 article of the Kagoshima and Okinawa edition of the *Osaka Asahi Shinbun* read as follows: “Ōmoto in Okinawa was Completely Annihilated.”<sup>117</sup>

Four months after this article about Ōmoto, the same newspaper had another article on *yuta* under the title of “The Regulation of the Depraved Creed of *Yuta*

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<sup>116</sup> Trevor Astley, “New Religions,” in *Nanzan Guide to Japanese Religions*, ed. Paul L. Swanson and Clark Chilson (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2006), 100.

<sup>117</sup> The Japanese original of the title is as follows: 沖縄の大本教完全に潰滅す. In “Okinawa no Ōmotokyō kanzen ni kaimetsu su” 沖縄の大本教完全に潰滅す, *Osaka Asahi Shinbun* 大阪朝日新聞, May 13, 1936, cited in Ōhashi, “Okinawa shāmanizumu no rekishi,” 68. According to Ōhashi, three regional newspapers in Okinawa, *Ryūkyū Shinpō*, *Okinawa Asahi Shinbun*, and *Okinawa Nippō* were integrated into one newspaper called *Okinawa Shinpō* in 1940. Unfortunately, most of the articles of this *Okinawa Shinpō* were lost during the Battle of Okinawa. For this reason, as a primary source to examine the *yuta gari* during the Shōwa period, Ōhashi relies on Kagoshima and Okinawa regional edition of *Osaka Asahi Shinbun*.

Tightened/ A Message from Mr. Yokota, the Chief of the Okinawan Special Higher Police.”<sup>118</sup> Since then, between 1936 and 1942, there were six different articles that criticized the activities of *yuta* and that reported large-scale arrests for spreading “false rumors.”<sup>119</sup> In the above-mentioned 1936 article, the number of *yuta* in Okinawa was estimated to be approximately three hundred.<sup>120</sup> The same article also noted that the proposal to arrest *yuta* as a part of the regulation of “depraved creed” was accepted by the Home Ministry (*Naimushō*). Accordingly in 1938, *yuta gari* took place and three hundred and fifty *yuta*, more than the number estimated in 1936, were arrested by the Special Higher Police.<sup>121</sup>

As Ōhashi points out, it is noteworthy that *yuta* were considered an “anti-state element” (*hankoku bunshi*) who acted against the national wartime policies.<sup>122</sup> The 1938 article entitled “Don’t Get Lost in Their Dubious Words: The Rounding-Up of *Yuta*, the Manipulators of Innocent Women and Girls” shows how the activities of *yuta* were viewed as antithetical to the state policies.<sup>123</sup> Citing the words of another Chief of the Special Higher Police, the article states:

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<sup>118</sup> The Japanese original of the title of the newspaper articles is as follows: 邪教ユタを嚴重取締/横田沖繩特高課長語る. In “Jakyō yuta o genjū torishimari/Yokota Okinawa Tokkō kachō kataru” 邪教ユタを嚴重取締/横田沖繩特高課長語る, *Osaka Asahi Shinbun* 大阪朝日新聞, September 26, 1936, cited in Ōhashi, “Okinawa shāmanizumu no rekishi,” 68

<sup>119</sup> Ōhashi, “Okinawa shāmanizumu no rekishi,” 67-8.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> The Japanese original of the title is as follows: 妖言に迷ふな/無知な婦女子をあやつる巫女群を一斉検挙. In “Yōgen ni mayouna/muchi na fujoshi o ayatsuru fujogun o issei kenkyo” 妖言に迷ふな/無知な婦女子をあやつる巫女群を一斉検挙, *Osaka Asahi Shinbun* 大阪朝日新聞, July 3, 1938, cited in Ōhashi, “Okinawa shāmanizumu no rekishi,” 68

I think that people in Okinawa are already well aware of how much the secret maneuvering of *yuta* is beguiling Okinawan women and girls. *Yuta* are spreading rumors that those who have gone to the battle front will die in the war unless they listen to *yuta*'s words. These *yuta* are interfering with the dedication of *kanzashi* [(ornamental hairpins)], which is actively promoted recently, saying that the practice is ominous. They are cheating people out of their money by pretending to have *kami gakari* and irresponsibly preaching about people's fortunes and misfortunes. They are indeed nothing but anti-state elements in regard to our national policies.<sup>124</sup>

Thus, the state authorities regarded the activities of *yuta* as constituting a serious threat against their wartime policies.

### ***Yuta* in Postwar Okinawa**

As for the postwar period, according to Ōhashi, the issue of *yuta* did not surface during the period of the American occupation.<sup>125</sup> It was not until the 1980s, when the debate over the customary rules about succession to property became a social issue, that the *yuta* practice attracted public attention again.<sup>126</sup> According to the new civil law, which was issued in Okinawa in 1957, half of the property of the deceased was given to the spouse and the rest was divided equally among the children. Thus, both men and women were given the right of inheritance. However, the same law also stipulated that the right to inherit ritual equipments would be given to somebody in accordance with the

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<sup>124</sup> Japanese original: 巫女の暗躍が如何に本県の婦女子を悩ましてゐるかは既に県民がよく承知のことと思ふ。巫女のいふことを聞かねば出征兵が戦死するとか、最近盛んに奨励されてゐる簪献納は不吉だといって妨害したり、神がかりを装って紊りに吉凶禍福を説いて金を捲き上げたり、全く国策上反国分子としか思はれない。In “Yōgen ni mayouna/muchi na fujoshi o ayatsuru fujogun o issei kenkyo” 妖言に迷ふな/無知な婦女子をあやつる巫女群を一斉検挙, *Osaka Asahi Shinbun* 大阪朝日新聞, July 3, 1938, cited in Ōhashi, “Okinawa shāmanizumu no rekishi,” 68.

<sup>125</sup> Ōhashi, “Okinawa shāmanizumu no rekishi,” 62. Ōshiro does not offer any detailed explanations on this point. It is beyond the scope of this Master's thesis to examine the treatment of *yuta* during the American occupation.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.



common law.<sup>127</sup> According to the Okinawan customary rule, the person who succeeded the *tōtōmē* (the mortuary tablet) would also inherit the property. According to this custom, women could not inherit property because there was a taboo in particular about the succession of the ancestral tablet. The taboo prohibits women from inheriting the *tōtōē*, or the woman in question and those related to her will be cursed generation after generation.<sup>128</sup>

The fact that women are excluded from inheriting both the *tōtōmē* and the property of the deceased caught the public's attention when the *Ryūkyū Shinpō* launched a series of articles about the *tōtōmē* issue in January 1980.<sup>129</sup> The readers responded promptly, showing that the issue was a serious concern, especially for Okinawan women:

during the first months [since the newspaper campaign started], [the newspaper company] received three to four hundred phone calls, and letters and postcards from the readers amounted to fifty. Also, some readers visited the newspaper company to report their experiences.<sup>130</sup>

The campaign was joined by other organizations, whose members held symposiums to discuss the issue further. There were even publications of books on the topic.<sup>131</sup>

Ōhashi, incorporating the results of the research conducted by a student at the University of Ryukyus with his own analysis of the *Ryūkyū Shinpō* articles on the *tōtōmē* issue, states that notably many readers who responded to the newspaper campaign pointed out the negative influence of *yuta* on the continuation of the *tōtōmē* succession

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<sup>127</sup> Ōhashi, "Okinawa shāmanizumu no rekishi," 55.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 57-8 and 62.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>130</sup> Japanese original: 最初の一ヶ月間に、読者からの電話が300～400件、手紙・ハガキが約50通に達した。新聞社へ訪れて実情を訴える読者もいた。In Ibid. What is notable about the issue of *yuta* in postwar Okinawa is that it was mostly women that voiced their opinions against *yuta*.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 50 and 53.

rule.<sup>132</sup> More specifically, people criticized that *yuta* supported the maintenance and reinforcement of the exclusive inheritance rule by making judgments on people's succession issues.<sup>133</sup> *Yuta*'s words were so influential that people often ended up having a dispute over certain judgments that *yuta* had made.<sup>134</sup> Moreover, in addition to the fact that *yuta* were responsible for preserving the male-only succession practice, people criticized that *yuta* were making profits by demanding an unreasonably expensive amount of money for their religious services.<sup>135</sup>

So far, I have briefly traced the history of suppression of *yuta* in Okinawa. As Ōhashi points out, their activities were regulated at transitional moments in the history of Okinawa.<sup>136</sup> In Ōhashi's words, "as the politicians and leaders [of Okinawa] direct their attention to [mainland] Japan, [the issue of] *yuta* is being highlighted."<sup>137</sup> Referring to both direct and indirect Japanese influence on Okinawa, Ōhashi contends that there have been 1) Okinawan efforts toward assimilating their own cultures into that of mainland Japan and 2) Japanese attempts to control the Islands.<sup>138</sup> As we have seen, *yuta* beliefs and practices were regarded as a hindrance by both sides. Despite the continuous regulations of *yuta* practices, their activities were not completely eradicated, showing that there was continuous demand of their services by the people of Okinawa. The fact that *yuta* were severely regulated during the time of great social turbulence may also indicate that they were most active and needed by people at these moments of social changes.

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<sup>132</sup> Ōhashi, "Okinawa shāmanizumu no rekishi," 47-50.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 43-6.

<sup>137</sup> Japanese original: 為政者・指導者層の目が日本へ向けられるとき、ユタがクロースアップされてくる。In Ibid., 44.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 43-6.

It is in this context that the figure of *yuta* or *yuta*-like figures in postwar Okinawan narratives shall be examined in the following sections.

## CHAPTER 2

### VOICES FROM SACRED SPACES

In previous sections, I have explored the ways in which *yuta* have been strongly criticized and suppressed especially at crucial junctures in Okinawan history. We have also seen that, despite such criticisms and regulations, *yuta* beliefs and practices have been sustained, indicating the importance of *yuta* practices to the people of Okinawa. Due probably to their close proximity to people's lives, the figure of *yuta* often appears in literary works by Okinawan authors. For instance, Ōshiro Tatsuhio, who is probably best known as the first Okinawan author to win the prestigious Akutagawa Prize for his “Kakuteru pātī” (Cocktail Party, 1967), has produced a number of literary works that feature *yuta*. In the newspaper article entitled “Sengo Okinawa bungaku ni miru *yuta* o meguru monogatari” (Narratives on *Yuta* in Okinawan Postwar Literature, 1998), the scholar of Okinawan modern literature, Nakahodo Masanori, states that, “Speaking of *yuta*, Ōshiro Tatsuhio's works immediately come to mind.”<sup>139</sup> Referring to the article by Nakahodo, Goya Minako also states that “No author has written yet about *yuta* as much as Ōshiro Tatsuhio has.”<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Japanese original: ユタと言えば、たちどころに思い浮かんでくるのが、大城立裕の諸作品であろう。In Nakahodo Masanori 仲程昌徳, “Sengo Okinawa bungaku ni miru yuta o meguru monogatari” 戦後沖縄文学に見るユタをめぐる物語, *Okinawa Taimusu* 沖縄タイムス, March 18, 1998, cited in Goya, “Ōshiro Tatsuhio mihappyō sakuhin nit suite,” 44.

<sup>140</sup> Japanese original: 大城立裕ほど多くの「ユタ」を書いた作家は未だいない。In Goya, “Ōshiro Tatsuhio mihappyō sakuhin nit suite,” 44. It is not uncommon for Okinawan writers to include the figure of *yuta* in the stories. These *yuta* figures are, however, rarely the stories' protagonists. Tokuda Tomoko's “Shinjō Matsu no tenshi” (Shinjō Matsu's Angel, 1989), for instance, focuses on an elderly woman who relies on *yuta*.

### **Author: Ōshiro Tatsuhiko**

Ōshiro Tatsuhiko was born in Okinawa in 1925. In 1943, when he was twenty-eight, Ōshiro, sponsored by the Okinawan government, entered a university in Shanghai. The school was established in 1900 first as a research institute and became a university in 1939.<sup>141</sup> The main objective of the university was to contribute to the coexistence and mutual prosperity of China and Japan.<sup>142</sup> While Ōshiro was still a student at the university, he joined the Japanese military. When the war ended, the university was closed and he left China.<sup>143</sup> After he returned to Okinawa in 1946, he soon began to publish his works. His debut work was a play called *Meiun* (Bright Clouds, 1947). His first novel, *Rōunki*, (A Story about an Old Man), was published two years later in 1949. Since then, he has published a number of novels and plays. He has also produced literary criticism, essays, historical accounts, biographies, and other non-fiction writings.

Ōshiro has attempted to portray the complex realities of postwar Okinawa in his writings from the very early stage of his career in literary production. When Okinawan authors attempt to establish their own literary methods, however, they are confronted with the issue of the dominant literary criteria at that time and also that of certain expectations from readers. In the case of Okinawan writers, they are also faced with the question of how “to retain their local readership while being accessible to mainland Japan.”<sup>144</sup> Ōshiro was one of those writers who faced this dilemma.

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<sup>141</sup> Ōshiro, *Kōgen o motomete*, 12. According to Ōshiro, he decided to attend the school because he could receive financial support from the government.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Goya, “Ōshiro Tatsuhiko mihappyō sakuhin nit suite,” 42.

<sup>144</sup> Michael Molasky and Steve Rabson, introduction to *Southern Exposure: Modern Japanese Literature from Okinawa*, ed. Michael Molasky and Steve Rabson (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2000), 2.

### Literary Production in Postwar Okinawa

Literary production in postwar Okinawa did not thrive until the mid-1950s. “In the early postwar years, [...] living conditions in Okinawa were so desperate that few residents had the leisure to write.”<sup>145</sup> It was in the late 1940s that the publication of local literary journal began. In 1949, for instance, two journals called *Gekkan Taimusu* (Monthly Times) and *Urama Shunjū* were published. Until the mid-1950s, these journals contributed to introducing literary works by Okinawan authors to the public. Then, the situation changed in the 1950s. According to Michael Molasky and Steve Rabson, “The first dynamic period in postwar Okinawan literature did not arrive until the mid-1950s with the appearance of the radical student magazine, *Ryūdai bungaku* (University of the Ryukyus literature).”<sup>146</sup> Molasky and Rabson observes,

Begun by students at the University of the Ryukyus as a forum for publishing their own fiction and poetry, the magazine quickly emerged as a hotbed for critical debates about the ‘proper’ role of literature in a society undergoing foreign military occupation [...] The student editors of *Ryūdai bungaku* insisted that literature should address contemporary political and social conditions in Okinawa, and they published not only literary works excoriating the American occupiers, but theoretical treatises equally critical of local writers prominent at that time.<sup>147</sup>

Ōshiro was one of these writers who were criticized by members of *Ryūdai bungaku*, for “avoiding serious problems of the society” in their writings.<sup>148</sup> In his essay, “The Battle of Literature,” Ōshiro recollected the activities of *Ryūdai bungaku* and his reactions against them. For Ōshiro, *Ryūdai bungaku* was preoccupied by their anti-U.S. sentiments, so much so that they neglected the importance of developing the literary aspects of their

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<sup>145</sup> Molasky and Rabson, introduction to *Southern Exposure*, 5.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Japanese original: 社会のかかえる深刻な問題をさけて通っている。In Ōshiro, *Kōgen o motomete*, 156.

writings. Ōshiro thought that they fell short in their activities of literary production. In Ōshiro's words,

Their excessive obsession with logic and reasoning reduced the quality of their works. At the same time, they despised aestheticism and lyricism, had little sense of humor, ignored the Okinawan cultural climate, and left no room for eroticism. In doing so, they committed a serious crime of largely diminishing the possibility of literature.<sup>149</sup>

Thus, Ōshiro saw little hope in the *Ryūdai bungaku* circle. He attempted to produce texts that were not colored by his political orientation and retained the aesthetic qualities of literature in capturing the complex realities of Okinawa.

The publication of *Ryūdai bungaku* was suspended in 1956 due to its overt anti-U.S. occupation policies. After the suspension of *Ryūdai bungaku*, it was *Shin Okinawa bungaku* (New Okinawan Literature) that “became Okinawa’s preeminent forum for publishing a wide range of literature and criticism.”<sup>150</sup> Since its first publication in 1966, the journal contributed tremendously to the development of Okinawan postwar literature. “By the 1990s, however, *Shin Okinawa bungaku*’s influence had begun to wane, and the final issue was published in 1993.”<sup>151</sup> After the cessation of the publication of *Shin Okinawa bungaku*, it was *Okinawa bungei nenkan* (The Yearbook of Okinawan Literature), published annually between 1993 and 2008, that offered the space for local Okinawan authors to introduce their works to the readers both in and outside Okinawa. Ōshiro became one of the most active contributors to *Shin Okinawa bungaku* by publishing a number of articles, including both fiction and non-fiction. Beginning in

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<sup>149</sup> Japanese original: みずからの作品を理論的意識過剰のために痩せさせるかたわら、花鳥風月や抒情を蔑み、ユーモアを解さず、風土性に眼もくれず、エロスの入り込む余地を排したところ、文学の可能性の芽を大きく摘み取った罪は大きいといえよう。In Ōshiro, *Kōgen o motomete*, 165.

<sup>150</sup> Molasky and Rabson, introduction to *Southern Exposure*, 6.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

1975 the journal began to grant literary prizes called *Shin Okinawa bungakushō* (New Okinawan Literary Prize). Ōshiro served as one of the selecting committee members. His first short story published in the journal was “Kikkōbo” (Turtleback Tombs, 1966), which appeared in the second issue published in 1966. One year later, he became the first Okinawan author to win the Akutagawa Prize for literature with his novella, “Cocktail Party.”

It seemed that Ōshiro established his fame both in Okinawa and mainland Japan. Winning the prestigious Akutagawa Prize did not mean, however, that his attempt to reflect Okinawan indigenous culture in his writings was fully understood and appreciated within the literary circle of mainland Japan. In his essay, Ōshiro recalled how his “Turtleback Tombs” was treated at that time:

When I published my first anthology (1967) after I received the Akutagawa Prize, the editor in charge told me that he “could never understand this work [“Turtleback Tombs”].’ Although my “Turtleback Tombs” is acclaimed by critics today, it was almost completely disregarded before the reversion [of Okinawa].<sup>152</sup>

In contrast, “Turtleback Tombs” was highly evaluated by his Okinawan acquaintance:

When I was talking with Mr. Komesu Okifumi [(the Okinawan scholar of English literature)], we began to discuss what to write about Okinawa and he said, ‘You should write about elderly women.’ So I recommended my ‘Turtleback Tombs’ to him. This is how this work has acquired credit from Mr. Komesu.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Japanese original: 芥川賞をもらって最初の作品集（一九六七）を出したときにも、担当編集者は、この作品だけは分かりませんと言ってきた。「亀甲墓」は、今日でこそ批評家も褒めるけれども、復帰前にはほとんど相手にされなかった。In Ōshiro, *Kōgen o motomete*, 170-1. The English translation of “Kikkōbo,” “Turtleback Tombs” is not mine. I borrowed the translation of William J. Tyler in *Southern Exposure: Modern Japanese Literature from Okinawa*: 113-70.

<sup>153</sup> Japanese original: 米須興文君と話していて、沖縄で何を書くべきかという話になり、「おばあさんを書くべきですね」と言ったので、「亀甲墓」を読んでもくれと答えた。米須君がこの作品を絶賛することになったのは、それがきっかけであった。In *Ibid.*, 171.



Ōshiro's "Turtleback Tombs," which in Komesu's view depicted "the Okinawan world view of life and death and other mythical spaces," was disregarded in mainland Japan, probably because it was considered "too Okinawan" at that time. From this experience, Ōshiro was convinced that "The insight of the Japanese literary circle was clouded, looking at 'Okinawa' only from a political point of view."<sup>154</sup>

### Ōshiro Tatsuhiko's Works on *Yuta*

In Writing Okinawa: Narrative Acts of Identity and Resistance, Davinder L.

Bhowmik analyzes "Turtleback Tombs" as follows:

It is Ōshiro's emphasis on the theme of indigenous beliefs that makes 'Turtleback Tombs' more than a war documentary. As well as recording a particularly tragic moment in Okinawa's history, the work is a testimony of Ushi's [(the figure of an elderly woman in the story)] unshakable resolve to adhere to the ancient tradition of ancestor worship. At the level of historical description, [...] Ōshiro writes about a battle that results in the destruction of traditional Okinawan culture. More important, however, is Ōshiro's mythic depiction of a tightly bound communal society in which death is viewed not with finality, but far more hopefully, as the commencement of life with ancestors [...] Though Ōshiro considers the islands [of Okinawa] from a number of viewpoints, often in the guise of characters that stand in for ideas he wishes to explore, it is the ineffable spiritual world, rooted in the culture of the islands, which reigns supreme in his works.<sup>155</sup>

What Bhowmik calls "the theme of indigenous beliefs" appears in Ōshiro's other works as well. In the following section, I will examine "Meiro" (Maze, 1991), which focuses on the life of a *yuta*.<sup>156</sup> Bhowmik finds the essence of Ōshiro's works in his emphasis on Okinawan spiritual world. Indeed, what makes Ōshiro's works interesting is his skillful blending of indigenous beliefs, customs, and cultures of Okinawa and its socio-political

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<sup>154</sup> Japanese original: 日本の文壇が「沖縄」を政治的にだけ見て眼が曇っていることを、そのとき私は覚った. In Ōshiro, *Kōgen o motomete*, 171.

<sup>155</sup> Davinder L. Bhowmik, *Writing Okinawa: Narrative Acts of Identity and Resistance* (London: Routledge, 2008), 98 and 112.

<sup>156</sup> It should be noted that the term, "*yuta*," is considered to be derogatory although it is frequently used. These religious women do not usually call themselves "*yuta*" and also people tend to refrain from calling them as such directly.

issues. In “Turtleback Tombs,” Ōshiro combines the theme of the Battle of Okinawa and an elderly woman’s spirituality. In “Maze,” he portrays postwar Okinawan society through the character of a young *yuta*, who was born to Japanese and American parents.

Ōshiro has published his stories on *yuta* since the 1980s. *Gushō kara no koe* (The Voices from the Afterlife, 1992) is a collection of his four literary works that focus on the figure of an Okinawan woman with a certain spirituality. In the above-mentioned article, Nakahodo describes Ōshiro’s *The Voices from the Afterlife* as “a collection of short stories, which we should call a *yuta*-narratives collection.”<sup>157</sup> These four works are, in the order that they appear in the collection, “Meiro” (1991), “Mumyō no matsuri” (1981), “Zushigame” (1986), and “Fudō” (1992). They are all first introduced in Japanese literary journals: “Zushigame” was published in *Gunzō* while the other three works appeared in *Bungakukai* (The World of Literature). In the afterword of *The Voices from the Afterlife*, Ōshiro states that “Mumyō no matsuri” was probably the first attempt for a literary work to step inside the inner world of *yuta*.<sup>158</sup> Goya’s research on Ōshiro’s three unpublished works in the 1960s shows, however, that Ōshiro wrote stories that are considered to be a prelude to his works on *yuta* in the 1980s and thereafter.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Japanese original: ユタ作品集と呼んでいいような短編作品集. In Nakahodo, “Sengo Okinawa bungaku ni miru yuta o meguru monogatari,” cited in Goya, “Ōshiro Tatsuiro mihappyō sakuhin nit suite,” 44. The first three works, “Meiro,” “Mumyō no matsuri,” and “Zushigame,” are set in postwar Okinawa while the last one, “Fudō” is set in the Ryūkyū Kingdom. As I have explained earlier in chapter 1, there are male *yuta*. The protagonists of Ōshiro’s *yuta* stories are all women. “Mumyō no matsuri” focuses on women who operate *yuta* practices as their professions.

<sup>158</sup> Japanese original: ユタの内面世界への、多分はじめての文学の踏み込みである. In Ōshiro Tatsuiro 大城立裕, afterword to *Gushō kara no koe: tanpenshū* 後生からの声：短編集 (Tōkyō: Bungei Shunjū, 1992), 275.

<sup>159</sup> Goya, “Ōshiro Tatsuiro mihappyō sakuhin nit suite,” 41-50. Goya has found three unpublished works by Ōshiro.

Comparing the works in *The Voices from the Afterlife* and these three unpublished works, Goya points out that there are many similarities among them.<sup>160</sup>

According to Goya, “Maze” in *The Voices from the Afterlife*, which we will explore later, and one of these three unpublished works, “Gorufujō no haka” (The Grave in the Golf Course), are particularly similar in many respects.<sup>161</sup> The following brief comparison between these two works is based on Goya’s overview of “The Grave in the Golf Course” and my reading of “Maze.” In both stories, the protagonists are Okinawan women of mixed race. In “The Grave in the Gold Course,” the protagonist’s father returned to the U.S. when she was a two-year-old while in “Maze,” the protagonist’s father died in the Vietnam War when she was three. In both stories, their mothers had relationships with a black American and left for the U.S. when they were little. Left in Okinawa, these protagonists were raised by their grandmothers. While the protagonist of “The Grave in the Golf Course” grew up to be a caddy, that of “Maze” became a hostess at a club.

At first glance, these protagonists seem to be ordinary Okinawan women. However, what makes them different from others was that they are *yuta*. The main event of “The Grave in the Golf Course” centers on the protagonist’s mysterious experiences about the gravestones inside the golf course while in “Maze” it was *uganju* (a prayer spot) inside a U.S. military base. In the latter case, the protagonist has a strong urge to offer her prayers inside the base for her sick colleague and decides to do so despite rejections from the authorities and also her acquaintances. In this way, these two works are almost identical in terms of their basic settings and plots. It is notable that *yuta*

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<sup>160</sup> Goya, “Ōshiro Tatsuhiko mihappyō sakuhin nit suite,” 41-50.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 42-4.

figures in both stories are not depicted as a type of *yuta* who make their livings out of their religious practices. The *yuta* characters in both stories are ordinary Okinawan women, working as a caddy in the case of “The Grave in the Golf Course” and as a hostess in “Maze.”

### Ōshiro Tatsuhiko’s Perspective on *Yuta*

In fact, Ōshiro’s depiction of the figure of *yuta* in his narratives reflects his view of *yuta* as ordinary Okinawans. Just as their fellow Okinawans are, these *yuta* women are also under the influence of the social and political climate. In the afterword of *Gushō kara no koe*, Ōshiro states,

*Yuta* are ordinary people and their spiritual abilities take effect only when necessary. I often write about *yuta* in my novels. A critical review on one of my works said that the *yuta* character in the story had no mystical air. When I read this, I thought that the criticism was somewhat off the point. The fact that *yuta* are ordinary people means that the mystic nature penetrates through Okinawan people’s lives as something ordinary. Okinawa, while in the midst of modern civilization, as a whole stores ancient aspects beneath the surface.<sup>162</sup>

As this comment suggests, *yuta* figures in Ōshiro’s stories do not necessarily refer to themselves as *yuta*. Instead, they are depicted as ordinary Okinawan women just like other women without any particular spiritual abilities. His “Maze” is a case in point.

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<sup>162</sup> Japanese original: (前略) ユタは日常は平凡な生活者で、靈感能力だけが必要なときだけ働く。私はよくユタを小説に書くが、ある作品の書評で、登場するユタに神秘性が感じられないとあって、少々見当違いの批判だと思った。ユタが平凡な生活者であるということは、それだけ沖縄の生活全般に神秘性が日常化しているということだと思う。沖縄全体が、現代文明のなかにありながら、隠然と古代的なものを蔵しているのである。In Ōshiro, afterword to *Gushō kara no koe: tanpenshū*, 273-4. This view of Ōshiro on *yuta* is clearly presented in his “Meiro” and “Zushigame” (The term “zushigame” means “urns”). The beginning of the story portrays the interaction between the protagonist, an ordinary Okinawan woman with certain spirituality, and a *yuta*. As in “Mumyō no matsuri,” the protagonist of “Zushigame” gradually expresses her own spirituality as the story develops. The protagonist of “Zushigame” becomes *yuta* as she suffers from her personal problems.

### Story: “Maze”

“Maze” was first published in the Japanese literary magazine, Bungakukai, in 1991. It was nominated for the Kawabata Yasunari Literary Prize.<sup>163</sup> In “Maze,” the figure of *yuta* is an Okinawan woman named Matsuyo, who works at a club in Naha as a hostess. Matsuyo was born to a Japanese mother and an American father, who was stationed in one of the U.S. military bases in Okinawa. Set in postwar Okinawa after the 1972 reversion, the story begins with the scene in which Matsuyo helps one of her colleagues, Sachi, prepare to stay at a hospital because of pneumonia. Matsuyo soon begins to feel uneasy about the arrangement of Sachi’s room at the hospital. Worried about Sachi, Matsuyo requests that Yoshie, the nurse in charge of Sachi, change the direction of her bed. Perplexed, the nurse rejects Matsuyo’s request. Unable to understand each other, Matsuyo and the nurse begin to have a quarrel. Sachi knows that Matsuyo’s request about the bed is related to the fact that Matsuyo has a special spiritual ability to make her *yuta*. Yet, Sachi hesitates to tell this fact to the nurse because it is uncommon for a woman of mixed race to be a *yuta*.

In fact, Matsuyo, an Okinawan by heart with the looks of a white woman, looks strange in the eyes of many people. “What a strange *hāfu*,” the customers of the club would say, as they observe Matsuyo.<sup>164</sup>

From her looks, Matsuyo was completely a white woman. Yet, she could not speak English at all. Not to mention her poor English skills, it seemed that she was better at speaking in Okinawan dialects than in standard Japanese. It was known that when she was three, her father, a white soldier, went to Vietnam and died in the war. One year later, her mother had a relationship with a black soldier and left for the U.S. Since then, Matsuyo was raised by her grandmother in the

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<sup>163</sup> Goya, “Ōshiro Tatsuhiko mihappyō sakuhin nit suite,” 44.

<sup>164</sup> The term “*hāfu*” (half) is commonly used among Japanese to refer to people of mixed race.

countryside of Yomitan. Since around the time Matsuyo began to go to elementary school, she began to help her grandmother make incense sticks. In her senior year at school, she worked part-time, collecting empty bottles. As for cooking, she could make only Okinawan dishes such as *chanpurū* and *mbushī*. She had never seen steak although since she began to work at the club, her customers sometimes bought her one. Yet, she didn't think it tasted good. She didn't like bread, either.<sup>165</sup>

Raised by her Okinawan grandmother, despite people's certain expectations about Matsuyo based on her looks, it is only natural for her to be familiar with Okinawan cultures and customs, including its indigenous religious practices.

As Matsuyo happens to be born to Japanese and American parents, she obtained her spiritual ability regardless of her will. Since Matsuyo had her first experience of *kami dāri* (possession) when she was seven, she would have anxious feelings when, according to her own belief, the divine beings were delivering their messages to her. A prelude to her first experience of *kami dāri* was the combination of a thought of going to the U.S. to visit her mother and a headache followed by the feeling of unknown anxiety. After she “rushed out of her house as if she were prompted by something,”<sup>166</sup> she kept walking along a highway in bare feet for three days without eating anything. While she was wandering about,

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<sup>165</sup> Japanese original: 松代は見た感じではまるで白人なのに、英語を全然しゃべれない。英語どころか、共通語よりむしろ沖縄呉のほうがうまいかも知れない。なにしろ、三つのときに父親の白人兵はベトナムへ行って戦死し、一年後に母親は黒人兵といっしょになってアメリカへ渡ってしまい、そのあと読谷の田舎でお祖母さんに育てられた。小学校にあがる頃からはお祖母さんの線香作りの手伝いをして、上級生になると空き壺買いのアルバイトもした。料理もチャンプルーとかンブシーとか、沖縄の料理しか作れない。ステーキなど見たこともなかったし、クラブで働くようになってから客に奢られることはあるが、おいしいとは思わない。パンも好きではない。In Ōshiro Tatsuhiko 大城立裕, “Meiro” 迷路, in *Gushō kara no koe: tanpenshū* 後生からの声：短編集 (Tōkyō: Bungei Shunjū, 1992), 13.

<sup>166</sup> Japanese original: 何かに促されるように家をとびだして。In *Ibid.*, 14.

she visited many prayer spots in some villages without being told by anyone. At these prayer spots she offered her prayers, joining her palms together. Each time she prayed, she believed that she was getting closer to the U.S. Then, three days later, she returned and showed up at her grandmother's house.<sup>167</sup>

After this incident, Matsuyo had another experience of *kami dāri* when she was nineteen.

Different from the first time, however, it was not about herself but about her colleague:

Images of prayer spots here and there would pop into her mind. She felt that unless she went to these places right away and made prayers, her colleague's *mabui* (spirit) would not return to her, remaining away from her body. It was not through words. Yet, she could feel something urging her with a very strong force.<sup>168</sup>

After receiving permission from the colleague and her parents to offer prayers for her,

Matsuyo managed to find and visit eighteen different prayer spots without anyone's help.

Matsuyo was convinced that she was able to locate these places under the guidance of the deities.

Since then, more people come to visit Matsuyo for her help. She accepts people's requests only when she has the usual sense of restlessness about the person who visits her.

She also goes to people on her own when she has similar feelings. In both cases,

Matsuyo would not accept any rewards. Matsuyo gets upset when the nurse calls her a

*yuta*, for Matsuyo believes that she is different from those who advertise that they are

*yuta* and make profits out of their practices. For Matsuyo, visiting sacred places to pray

is not only for her clients' sake but for herself to regain psychological composure.

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<sup>167</sup> Japanese original: 誰にも教えられずに訪ねたのがいくつかの村の多くの拝所で、ちゃんと手をあわせて拝み、そのつどアメリカにそれだけ近づいているのだと信じた。そして、三日後にはお祖母さんの前に舞い戻った。In Ōshiro, "Meiro," 14.

<sup>168</sup> Japanese original: あちらこちらの拝所のイメージが浮かぶ。そこへ今にもとんで行って拝まないことには、その同僚のマブイ（霊）は体から落ちたまま戻ってこない、という。言葉ではない。が、なにかすごい勢いで促してくるものがある。In Ibid., 15.

### *Yuta* as a “Scapegoat”

It is not uncommon for Okinawan authors to portray some scenes where the characters interact with *yuta*. However, they rarely portray the inner world of *yuta*. In this respect, “Maze” is unique because it focuses on a *yuta*’s perspective by making her the protagonist of the story. It is particularly notable that Matsuyo perceives herself as a *yuta* “victim.” When Sachi’s nurse calls her a *yuta*, Matsuyo feels confused and also uncomfortable:

Matsuyo wondered how to respond. She didn’t want people to call her a *yuta* easily in such a disdainful manner. She thought of herself as being different from ordinary *yuta*. Matsuyo told herself: I know that many *yuta* do their practices as business. I didn’t wish to become one. I simply receive directions from the god while feeling restless. So I’m innocent. I’m rather a victim.<sup>169</sup>

This idea of *yuta* as the “victim” seems to reflect Ōshiro’s perspective on *yuta*: namely, the sense of anxiety of *yuta* is social, rather than purely personal. Furthermore, for Ōshiro, the issue of *yuta* is closely related to that of turbulent Okinawan postwar identity.

In the postscript of *The Voices from the Afterworld*, Ōshiro discusses the concept of *yuta* as the “scapegoat” of their contemporaries:

When I was a boy, I was thinking that *yuta* would disappear by the time I became an adult. However, rather than decreasing, they are probably increasing. It was more than ten years ago that I began to have the desire to write this situation, analyzing the inner life of *yuta*. I wrote ‘Mumyō no matsuri’ as a trial. It was probably the first attempt for a literary work to step inside the inner world of *yuta*. [Since then] I have written some [other works on *yuta*]. [The more I wrote these works,] the more I was convinced that from the pre-modern period up until the present, *yuta* have been the scapegoat of the contemporaries who had to live

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<sup>169</sup> Japanese original: 松代は、どう答えたらよいか迷った。ユタと、さも軽蔑した口調で簡単に言ってほしくない気持ちがあった。世間なみのユタとは違うと考えている。世間には商売でユタをやっているのが多いではないか。自分は望んだわけでもなく、神様からワサめきとともに指図されるのを受けただけであるから、自分に罪はない。むしろ犠牲者ではないか。In Ōshiro, “Meiro,” 38. It is common for Okinawan authors to portray commercial *yuta* practices.



within the civilization and social structure at that time. In this way the number of *yuta* increases under the civilization and social structure of the ‘military bases.’<sup>170</sup>

Here, Ōshiro suggests that the issue of *yuta* cannot be understood independently of the social circumstances in which they live. Ōshiro speculates that “their [(*yuta*’s)] substantial anxiety seems to be probably related to the insecurity of the contemporary Okinawan ethnic identity.”<sup>171</sup> In other words, the anxiety of *yuta*, whose daily lives are inevitably under the influence of social and political situations of postwar Okinawa, epitomizes that of their fellow contemporary Okinawans. It was in this context that Ōshiro wrote his first published work on *yuta*, “Mumyō no matsuri.” Referring to this relationship between the anxiety of *yuta* and that of contemporary Okinawans in general, Ōshiro states,

What I struggled [in creating “Mumyō no matsuri”] to describe were the symbolic ways in which the sense of anxiety among contemporary Okinawans about their identity appears in [the inner life of ] an [Okinawan] woman. That I combined the [two] ambivalent words of ‘mumyō’ and ‘matsuri’ was to show my empathy [with *yuta*].<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Japanese original: 私は少年時代に、自分が大人になるころにはユタはいなくなるだろう、と考えていた。しかし、減るどころか、むしろ増えているかも知れない。その事情を、ユタの内面にそくして小説にしてみたいと、考えるようになったのは十余年前のことで、その試作品が「無明のまつり」である。ユタの内面世界への、多分はじめての文学の踏み込みである。いくつか書いてきたが、近世期いらい今日にいたるまで、ユタは同時代の文明と体制下に生きなければならない人たちのスケープ・ゴートだ、という思いが募るばかりである。「基地」という文明と体制の下で、ユタが増える事情がここにある。In Ōshiro, afterword to *Gushō kara no koe: tanpenshū*, 275.

<sup>171</sup> Japanese original: 彼女たちの実在の不安は、おそらく現代の沖縄の民族的アイデンティティーの不安感と無縁のものではないと思われる（後略）。In Ōshiro Tatsuhiro 大城立裕, “Yuta to kagaku to shūkyō to” ユタと科学と宗教と, in *Hāfu taimu Okinawa* ハーフタイム沖縄 (Naha-shi: Niraisha, 1994), 21.

<sup>172</sup> Japanese original: 現代沖縄人のアイデンティティーの不安が、一女性のなかにかなる象徴であられるかの表現が、苦心したところであり、題名に「無明」と「まつり」というアンビバレントな言葉を結びつけたのも、私の共感のしるしであった。In *Ibid.*, 22.

Previously I have compared Ōshiro's earliest unpublished work on *yuta*, "The Grave in the Gold Course," and the published equivalent work, "Maze." Goya states that the fundamental difference between the two is that the protagonist's supernatural ability is written as a matter of individual problems in "The Grave in the Gold Course" while "Maze" concerns the larger social context as well.<sup>173</sup> Regarding "The Grave in the Golf Course," Goya points out the significance of Ōshiro's "attempt at actively incorporating the indigenous Okinawan elements in literature" when many Okinawan literary works at that time were highly politicized. Goya also notes that "when 'The Grave in the Golf Course' was written, Ōshiro himself was not fully aware of the significance of employing 'the [figure of] *yuta*' in literature."<sup>174</sup> By the time Ōshiro completed "Mumyō no matsuri," however, it seems that Ōshiro found the theme of describing the issue of turbulent Okinawan postwar identity by shedding light on the life of *yuta*.

### ***Yuta and the Issue of Land Loss***

Ōshiro's literary works on *yuta* reflect his perspective on *yuta* that their sense of anxiety has social roots. In other words, he stresses that their feelings of restlessness may not be identified completely as personal problems of individual women. How exactly, then, does Ōshiro describe the intersection between the suffering of *yuta* and social problems in postwar Okinawa? In part, Ōshiro does so by touching upon the land issue of Okinawa as the frequent cause of the sense of anxiety of *yuta*. In particular, Ōshiro portrays the land issue by focusing on the destructions of *utaki* and *uganju*. The land issue is indeed key to understanding the social and political climate of postwar Okinawa.

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<sup>173</sup> Goya, "Ōshiro Tatsuhiko mihappyō sakuhin ni tsuite," 44.

<sup>174</sup> Japanese original: 沖縄の土俗的な部分を文学に積極的に取り入れた試み: 「ゴルフ場の墓」の執筆時点では、「ユタ」を文学に取り入れる価値が十分に自覚されていたとは言えない。In Ibid.

Especially, the combination of land loss and forced dislocation has constituted a large portion of the social problems in postwar Okinawa. Let us now briefly look at the process of land loss over the course of time in postwar Okinawa.

The Okinawans who survived the Battle of Okinawa began their postwar lives in the American detention camps, which had been constructed after April of 1945. These facilities for civilians were built separately from the P.O.W. camps for the soldiers.<sup>175</sup> Already in March 1945, when the seventy-seventh Infantry Division landed in Kerama islands, Chief of Naval Operation (1945-47), Chester William Nimitz, proclaimed the suspension of the Japanese government's administrative right on the Southeast Islands and also the initiation of the U.S. military control over the region. Examining the declaration, Asato Susumu and others acknowledge a momentous shift, "Here, Okinawa prefecture in effect ceased to exist and the new *yogawari* [(change of the epoch)] began."<sup>176</sup>

It was not until October 1945 that people were permitted to return to their home villages and towns from their temporary shelters. Permission was first given to those who were at the detention campus in the Northern part of mainland Okinawa, including Nago, Ginoza, and Kin.<sup>177</sup> At that time, the U.S. military government and its advisory

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<sup>175</sup> Ishihara Masaie 石原昌家, *Sengo Okinawa no shakaishi: gunsagyō, senka, daimitsubōeki no jidai* 戦後沖縄の社会史：軍作業・戦果・大密貿易の時代 (Naha-shi: Hirugisha, 1995), 23.

<sup>176</sup> Asato Susumu 安里進 et al., *Okinawa-ken no rekishi* 沖縄県の歴史 (Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten, 1996), 302.

<sup>177</sup> Kinjō SEitoku 金城正篤 et al., *Okinawa-ken no hyakunen* 沖縄県の百年, *Kenmin 100-nenshi* 47 (Tōkyō: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 2005), 24; and Yonakuni Noboru 与那国暹, *Sengo Okinawa no shakai hendō to kindai: Begun shihai to taishū undō no dainamizumu* 戦後沖縄の社会変動と近代化：米軍支配と大衆運動のダイナミズム (Naha-shi: Okinawa Taimususha, 2001), 29.

council, Okinawa Advisory Council, were in charge of determining the process of transferring people from the detention camps.<sup>178</sup> According to Yonakuni Noboru, it was decided that if people could not return to their original hometowns and villages, they would be transferred to nearby areas.<sup>179</sup>

Those who were able to return to their original hometowns had to start their lives from scratch. According to Kinjō Seitoku and others,

The first thing that those who returned to their hometowns did was to remove the ruins of unexploded bombs and weapons, collect scattered bones, and to build memorial towers. Their immediate goal was to rejuvenate agriculture and finishing to self-supply basic necessities of life such as food, clothes, and shelters.<sup>180</sup>

Thus, those who could go back to their homes began to rebuild their own lives. In the mean time, many people found themselves trapped in the detention camps. This was partly because their home communities were destroyed during the war. What is more, people could not return to their communities because the areas were occupied and used by the U.S. as its bases, arsenals, or other military facilities. As Yamamoto Eiji contends, while people were detained at the camps, “many lost their residential and farming lands that they had owned.”<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Okinawa Advisory Council was the first postwar administrative organ in mainland Okinawa. The council consisted of fifteen Okinawan representatives. In Yonakuni, *Sengo Okinawa no shakai hendō to kindai*, 37.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Japanese original: 郷里に復帰した人びとがまず手をつけたのは不発弾や武器の残骸を撤収し、散乱した遺骨を集めて慰霊塔を建てることだった。当面の目標は農業と漁業を復活させて最低限の衣食住を自給することだった。In Kinjō et al., *Okinawa-ken no hyakunen*, 241.

<sup>181</sup> Japanese original: 多くの住民は彼らが所有していた居住地・農耕地を失ってしまったのである。In Yamamoto Eiji 山本英治, *Okinawa to Nihon kokka: kokka o shōshasuru ‘chiiki’* 沖縄と日本国家：国家を照射する＜地域＞ (Tōkyō: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 2004), 48.

The following is an exemplary case in which people's home communities were completely lost to the U.S. military facilities. For instance, the Kadena Air Base located in the central part of mainland Okinawa was a case in point. It was first constructed by the Japanese army as Naka airfield in 1943 and taken over and expanded by the U.S. marine.<sup>182</sup> As a result, the Kadena Air Base became forty times as large as the Naka airfield.<sup>183</sup> The airfield was surrounded by many residential areas that were made dysfunctional due to the further construction of the U.S. military facilities in the areas.<sup>184</sup> Observing the situation at that time, Namihira Isao states,

The construction of airfields and expansion works proceeded with no regard to the will of the residents and the former residential communities were gone without leaving any trace thereof. Those who returned from the evacuee camps could not go back to their own communities. Therefore, they built standardized houses in designated areas and ran their communal lives in an attempt to rebuild their postwar lives. However, since the base-areas were not open [to people], most of the residents had to live in surrounding areas of Kadena Air Base with people from different communities all mixed up.<sup>185</sup>

Thus, the Kadena Air Base epitomized the cases in which the Japanese military facilities were succeeded and expanded by the U.S. military after the war.

There were also cases in which the U.S. military facilities were newly constructed and the original residents of the area lost their land to these military facilities. This

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<sup>182</sup> Kinjō et al., *Okinawaken no hyakunen*, 303.

<sup>183</sup> Arasaki Moriteru 新崎盛暉, *Okinawa gendaishi* 沖縄現代史 (Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten, 1996), 13; Asato, *Okinawaken no rekishi*, 303.

<sup>184</sup> Namihira Isao 波平勇夫, "Sengo Okinawa toshi no keisei to tenkai: Koza-shi ni miru shokuminchi toshi no kidō" 戦後沖縄都市の形成と展開：コザ市にみる植民地都市の軌道, in *Okinawa Kokusai Daigaku Sōgō Gakujutsu Kenkyū Kiyō* 沖縄国際大学総合学術研究紀要 9, no. 2 (March 2006): 24.

<sup>185</sup> Japanese original: 飛行場建設や拡張工事は住民の意思とは無関係に進められ、元集落は跡形もない。避難民収容所から帰還した人びとは元の集落に戻れず、指定された場所に規格住宅を建て集団生活を営み戦後の生活再建を図るが、基地は開放されないことからほとんどの住民は嘉手納飛行場の縁辺に各集落の住民が混住して生活している。 In *Ibid.*

includes, for instance, the Futenma airfield located in the central part of mainland Okinawa. According to Namihira, “The construction of the Futenma airfield was also at will of the [American] occupier.”<sup>186</sup> As explained in *Okinawa hyakka jiten* (The Encyclopedia of Okinawa), for those who lost their communities due to the construction of the Futenma airfield and had to move to the neighboring areas, their homes were in front of their eyes. However, they did not have access to their original communities as these places were now inside the U.S. military bases.

Overall, between 1945 and 1953, the residents of fifty-three communities in five cities and ten villages were forced to leave their own residential areas and move to other communities as theirs were occupied by the U.S. for military use.<sup>187</sup> In this way, the construction of the U.S. military facilities deprived many Okinawan people of their living space.

The process of compulsory detachment from one’s own land under the U.S. military control further accelerated in the 1950s due partly to the American military facilities being damaged by typhoons and therefore necessitating reconstruction.<sup>188</sup> More importantly, however, the dislocation of people increased due to the eviction order issued by the U.S. In correspondence to the political situation at that time, already since 1949,

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<sup>186</sup> Japanese original: 普天間飛行場建設も占領者の意のままであった。In Namihira, “Sengo Okinawa toshi no keisei to tenkai,” 24.

<sup>187</sup> Yonakuni, *Sengo Okinawa no shakai hendō to kindaika*, 41-51.

<sup>188</sup> Okinawa Taimususha 沖縄タイムス社 ed., *Shomin ga tsuzuru Okinawa sengo seikatsushi* 庶民がつづる沖縄戦後生活史 (Naha-shi: Okinawa Taimususha, 1998), 95; and Miyazato Seigen 宮里政玄, “Ryūkyū seifu hōsoku, kōwa jōyaku hakkō: tōchi no seitōsei sakiokuri ni” 琉球政府発足・講和条約発効：統治の正当性先送りに, in *Sengo o tadoru: “Amerika yū” kara “Yamato no yo” e* 戦後をたどる「アメリカ世」から「ヤマトの世」へ, ed. Naha-shi Rekishi Hakubutsukan 那覇歴史博物館 (Naha-shi: Ryūkyū Shinpōsha, 2007), 114.

the U.S. government had begun to move toward the reinforcement of its military power in Okinawa.<sup>189</sup>

The political “turmoil” for the U.S. at that time included such issues as the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949 and the outbreak of the Korean War (1950-53), to name only a few.<sup>190</sup> Under such circumstances, the U.S. decided on a long-term possession of its military bases in Okinawa in 1945. Accordingly, since around 1945, public works projects began to thrive in mainland Okinawa. This escalation of construction works is generally referred to as *gunkōji būmu* (the military construction boom). In accordance with these circumstances, “mainland Okinawa was quickly transformed into the ‘Island of Military Bases.’”<sup>191</sup> Accordingly in the 1950s, the economic structure of Okinawa shifted from the prewar system based on agriculture to the one that was largely dependent upon the military bases.<sup>192</sup>

Before continuing our discussion of the American land seizure in the 1950s, two things must be addressed. First, during the years of ‘the military construction boom,’ many infrastructures, such as harbor facilities, roads, other facilities for telecommunication, water supply, and electric power, were also constructed.<sup>193</sup> Moreover, private enterprises providing other services and products were also

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<sup>189</sup> Namihira, “Sengo Okinawa toshi no keisei to tenkai,” 24.

<sup>190</sup> Namihira, “Sengo Okinawa toshi no keisei to tenkai,” 24; and Iha Michiko 伊波美智子, “Fukkōki no Okinawa keizai” 復興期の沖縄経済 in *Naha onna no ashiato* (sengo hen) なは・女のあしあと (戦後編), ed. Naha-shi Sōmubu Joseishitsu 那覇市総務部女性室 (Naha-shi: Ryūkyū Shinpōsha Jigyōkyoku Shuppanbu, 2001), 174.

<sup>191</sup> Kinjō et al., *Okinawaken no hyakunen*, 245.

<sup>192</sup> Iha, “Fukkōki no Okinawa keizai,” 174. It is common for Okinawan postwar literature to portray the people of Okinawa engaging in the jobs at the bases.

<sup>193</sup> Namihira, “Sengo Okinawa toshi no keisei to tenkai,” 25; Kinjō et al., *Okinawaken no hyakunen*, 245; and Iha, “Fukkōki no Okinawa keizai,” 174.

established.<sup>194</sup> The construction of these social plants began in 1950 under the then military commander Josef Robert Sheetz. The year 1950 was popularly referred to as *Sitsu zensei* (Sheetz's Good Government), pointing to various projects initiated by Sheetz to rehabilitate the aftermath of the war, including the changes caused by the American occupation policy.

As to the intent of 'Sheetz's Good Government,' scholars point out that the policy was implemented primarily to win the populace's support for the U.S. bases in Okinawa.<sup>195</sup> Yonakuni, for instance, analyzes the actual intent of the policy as follows:

In order to construct and maintain permanent military bases in Okinawa, it was necessary for the U.S. to suppress people's dissatisfaction and gain people's acceptance and support for the bases. It was for these purposes that Sheetz poured extraordinary effort into economic recovery of Okinawa and its education, such as the opening of the University of the Ryukyus, along with the policies toward democratization of Okinawa.<sup>196</sup>

For Yonakuni, "the basic stance of the policies of the U.S. toward Okinawa is," in the end, "to maintain its rule over Okinawa effectively without losing the function of the bases that they are in need of."<sup>197</sup> Another scholarly work, *Okinawaken no hyakunen* (One Hundred Years of Okinawa Prefecture, 2005), explaining the content of 'Sheetz's Good

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<sup>194</sup> Iha, "Fukkōki no Okinawa keizai," 174.

<sup>195</sup> Yonakuni, *Sengo Okinawa no shakai hendō to kindai*, 181; and Kinjō et al., *Okinawaken no hyakunen*, 245

<sup>196</sup> Japanese original: 沖縄に恒久的な基地を建設し維持していくために、アメリカは住民の不満をすずめ、基地の容認と支持を取りつける必要があった。シートが民主化政策と並んで、沖縄の経済復興と琉球大学開学など教育面に、並々ならぬ力を注いだのもこのためであった。In Yonakuni, *Sengo Okinawa no shakai hendō to kindai*, 181. As I will examine later in the analysis of Nakandakari's "Mothers/Women," a similar kind of distrust was observable when it was decided that the members of SDF would be stationed in Okinawa.

<sup>197</sup> Japanese original: アメリカの対沖縄政策の基本的な立場は、米軍の必要とする基地機能をそこなうことなく効率的に沖縄を統治していくことである。In *Ibid.*



Government,’ states that people began to stop suffering from starvation.<sup>198</sup> This seems to suggest that various programs based on Sheetz’s policy in effect contributed to improving the lives of people. At the same time, the same author indicates that such changes for the better were not without problems:

Although Okinawan people solidly applauded these social policies, calling it ‘Sheetz’s Good Government,’ as the military construction that was to fortify the entire island proceeded, they became gradually aware of the serious problems of the land-use for military purposes.<sup>199</sup>

It is beyond the scope of present paper to investigate the impact of ‘Sheetz’s Good Government’ on the lives of Okinawan people. The purpose of our brief discussion of Sheetz’s policy is to show the transformation of Okinawan society in the 1950s from a broader perspective. More specifically, the surge of construction in the 1950s included not only further construction of military bases but the establishment of various other infrastructures, private enterprises, and public facilities that included, for instance, the University of the Ryukyus, the Posts and Telecommunications Agency, and a radio broadcasting station (AKAR).<sup>200</sup>

Second, the involvement of mainland Japan in the construction boom needs to be pointed out. At the initial state of the construction surge, companies from Japan, the U.S., the Philippines, Taiwan, and Hong Kong participated in the competition. Since the end of the 1950s, however, the Japanese companies alone took over the work.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Kinjō et al., *Okinawaken no hyakunen*, 2.

<sup>199</sup> Japanese original: これらの社会政策を沖縄住民はこぞって“シート善政”とたたえたが、全島要塞化の軍工事が進むにつれてやがて深刻な軍用地問題に気がつくのである。In Ibid., 245.

<sup>200</sup> Iha, “Fukkōki no Okinawa keizai,” 175.

<sup>201</sup> Namihira, “Sengo Okinawa toshi no keisei to tenkai,” 25; and Arasaki, *Okinawa gendaishi*, 13.

Arasaki states, “Not limited to the construction of the military bases, throughout the 1950s, Okinawa, as a market for mainland Japan to obtain U.S. dollars, played a significant role in terms of its postwar rehabilitation.”<sup>202</sup> This is one of many other examples that signal the relationship between mainland Japan and Okinawa under the U.S. military control. It is indeed important to keep in mind that Okinawa played an important role as a cornerstone for not only the U.S. but also mainland Japan for its postwar economic growth.<sup>203</sup>

Earlier I examined cases in which people lost their lands while they were detained in the evacuation camps. For those people, “when they returned from the detention facilities, their communities had, partly or entirely, disappeared and were being used instead as military bases.”<sup>204</sup> These people were then to become *gunyōchi jinushi* (owners of lands used for military purposes).<sup>205</sup> Namihira argues that “*gunyōchi jinushi* is a new class created due to the defeat of Japan, the U.S. occupation, and furthermore its occupation policies [...]”<sup>206</sup> These landowners were not given any compensation by the U.S.<sup>207</sup> The situation was to change after the independence of Japan in 1952.

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<sup>202</sup> Japanese original: 基地建設だけでなく、五〇年代を通して、沖縄は、日本のドル獲得市場として、日本の戦後復興の上で大きな意味をもった。In Arasaki, *Okinawa gendaishi*, 13.

<sup>203</sup> Kinjō et al., *Okinawaken no hyakunen*, 245.

<sup>204</sup> Japanese original: 収容所から帰還したときにはムラは一部またはすべて消滅し軍事基地に転用されていた。In Namihira, “Sengo Okinawa toshi no keisei to tenkai,” 50.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., 50-2.

<sup>206</sup> Japanese original: 軍用地地主は日本の敗戦と米軍占領さらには占領政策によって創出された新しい階層。In Ibid., 51.

<sup>207</sup> Arasaki, *Okinawa gendaishi*, 12. This issue of land loss is relevant also the the analysis of Nakandakari’s “Mothers/Women.” As I will explore further in chapter 3, the figure of an elderly woman in “Motehrs/Women,” Grandma Kamado, insists on protecting her own farm land.

After Japan gained its independence, the U.S. faced the question of the legitimacy of their land use in Okinawa.<sup>208</sup> The U.S. attempted to solve this issue by signing a contract with Okinawan landowners and making a payment for using their lands. The terms of the contract proposed by the U.S. were, however, far from satisfactory in terms of the amount and period of payment. As a result, more than ninety percent of the landowners refused to sign the contract.<sup>209</sup> The problems were, therefore, left unsolved. In the meantime, the importance of the military facilities in Okinawa was escalating for the U.S. political strategic purposes, which led to another forceful action by the U.S.

In 1953, the U.S. proclaimed the Land Expropriation Code.<sup>210</sup> This code allowed the U.S. to forcefully deprive people of more lands for their military use. The expression *jūken to burudōzā* (bayonets and bulldozers) is used as a metonym of compulsive land expropriation by the U.S. and people's traumatic experiences thereof. In fact, the use of bayonets and bulldozers was a common means for the land expropriation.

As these coercive land seizures grew in number, Okinawan people's frustration also heightened, leading them to rise up against the U.S. military policies on their land use. This movement, which started in the mid-1950s, is popularly referred to as *shimagurumi tōsō* (all-island struggle). This land movement in the 1950s was the prelude to the movement that began in the late 1960s toward the reversion of Okinawa.

As we have discussed so far, the American occupation disrupted the link between people and their home communities. As we have seen, people's land was expropriated for various purposes, most notably for the construction of the U.S. military bases.

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<sup>208</sup> Arasaki, *Okinawa gendaishi*, 12.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 12-3.

<sup>210</sup> The official name of the code in Japanese is 土地収用令(*tochi shūyō rei*).

Extensive damage was caused, and has been caused, to the people of Okinawan by the presence of the military bases. At the same time, however, it should not be forgotten that many Okinawan people found themselves in a situation where they had to rely on these military bases to sustain their livelihood. Namely, after a monetary economy was reintroduced in Okinawa in 1946, the U.S. military facilities functioned as the single biggest employer for Okinawan people. These jobs were popularly referred as *gunsagyō* (military works). For many, working at the American bases was the best, or probably the only, working opportunity they could have.

### **The Loss of Sacred Spaces in “Maze”**

In the previous sections, I have touched upon the land issue in postwar Okinawa under the U.S. rule. Okinawan stories of the 1970s and 1980s directly or indirectly show the long-lasting influence of the war and the American occupation on the people of Okinawa across the generations. There are many ways in which the legacy of the war and the occupation, including the issue of land loss, are portrayed. Returning to our previous discussion of Ōshiro's accounts in “Maze,” I would like to call attention to his connection between the beliefs about *yuta* in the context of postwar Okinawa and the land issue, especially the construction of the U.S. military bases on Okinawan soil and the destruction of the sacred spaces such as *utaki* and other *uganju*.

In order to explore how the land issue plays a role in portraying the link between the anxiety of *yuta* and that of Okinawan people in “Maze,” I will focus on the two episodes about *uganju* inside the American military bases, on which the narrative centers. In the first episode, what Matsuyo believes to be the messages from the *kamisama* (deities) appears in the form of a dream about “the *kamisama* and Americans having a

quarrel”<sup>211</sup> at a construction site inside the Kadena Air Base.

The Construction project at the Kadena Air Base was to build culverts for Okinawans who lived in nearby areas. According to the narrative, they are suffering from a drainage problem caused by the highway that “the U.S. Forces have built purely for their military purposes soon after the end of the war” without considering the need of the residents living in the surrounding areas.<sup>212</sup> Matsuyo calls her boyfriend, Tamai, who is working as the director of Cultural Affairs division at the Okinawa prefectural office, and informs him of her dream about the quarrel between the deities and the Americans. Being aware of Matsuyo’s special ability, Tamai heads to the construction site and tells the people there to halt the project. As one may guess, however, Tamai cannot easily convince them, especially not Yona Hanjirō, the president of the construction company in charge of the project. For Yona, Tamai’s request is unacceptable: The project has had a rough passage until it has been finally permitted since the plan involves the construction work inside the U.S. military bases. In the end, however, the project is suspended because it turns out to be that there are the remains of shell mounds at the exact spot inside the military bases where the culverts are to be built. In this way, Matsuyo manages to find a cultural asset of shell mounds buried and forgotten in the military base.

This is the only time when Matsuyo receives message from the deities through a dream. Mostly, it is through certain images that appear in her mind that she receives similar intimations. There is a pattern to the process: Matsuyo first feels the sense of

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<sup>211</sup> Japanese original: 神様とアメリカが喧嘩をしている。In Ōshiro, “Meiro,” 20.

<sup>212</sup> Japanese original: 戦後まもなく米軍が戦略目的だけを考えて造った。In Ibid., 19. It is noteworthy that while “Mothers/Women” (chapter 3) is overtly politicized, Ōshiro’s “Maze” refers also to political issues.

restless and then, sometimes simultaneously, the images of some *uganju* occur to her mind. Notably, Matsuyo is able to detect the location of *uganju* to which she has never been. She understands that she is capable of finding these places with the guidance of the deities. In other words, it is as if the deities were guiding Matsuyo to some specific *uganju*, depending on what kinds of messages they are trying to convey, so that she can offer her prayers there. Her sense of anxiety continues until she manages to find the correct *utaki* and *uganju* through the deities' indications. In this process, it is especially noteworthy that Matsuyo is capable not only of identifying already discovered *uganju* but also of discovering forgotten *uganju*, as seen in the first episode.

The second episode is about Matsuyo's attempt to identify correct *utaki* and *uganju* for her sick colleague, Sachi. Despite the sense of uneasiness, Matsuyo is not able easily to locate in her mind all the places where she is supposed to offer her prayers. One time, Junko, another colleague of Matsuyo at the club, is perplexed by Matsuyo's obstinacy about determining the correct prayer spots to pray for Sachi:

“If the hospital has a *hi nu kan*, I will make sure to offer my prayers there,” said Matsuyo. “No, they don't, so there is nothing you can do about it. You can pray at the *hi nu kan* at your own house. All the *kamisama* are the same everywhere, aren't they?” Junko replied to Matsuyo. Is that really so? Matsuyo wondered. If the *kamisama* are the same anywhere, it doesn't make sense that there are so many *uganju* (prayer spots), such as *utaki*, in this world. There are many deities, and it seems that depending on what the prayer ought to do, how much *seji* (spiritual power) would be needed is already determined. That's why the *kamisama* tell me at which *uganju* I should go to offer my prayers.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> Japanese original: 「病院にヒヌカンがあれば、それだけでも拝んでおくけどね」「ないものは仕方がないでしょう。自分のを拝んだらいいさあ。神様はどこでも同じでないの」そうかなあ、と思う。どこでも同じなら、世間にあんなに沢山のウタキ（御嶽）などのウガンジュ（拝所）がある道理はない。たくさんの神様がいて、拝む人の必要のつとどれだけの神様のセジ（霊力）が必要だときまっているらしいのだ。どこそこを拝めと、神様から知らせがあるのは、そのせいだろう。In Ōshiro, “Meiro,” 25.

With this belief in her mind, for Matsuyo, it is of urgent importance to find proper places to pray.

Notably, it turns out to be that the *uganju* that Matsuyo is supposed to visit to give her prayers is, again, located inside the Kadena Air Base. In fact, it is the same remains of the shell mounds where the culverts are supposed to be built in the first episode. Once the correct *uganju* is determined, Matsuyo discusses the issue with Tamai, who she believes to be the most understanding about her special ability. In fact, now that her grandmother has passed away, Tamai is the only person who seriously listens to Matsuyo. As seen in the first episode, it was Tamai who supported Matsuyo to halt the construction project. Contrary to Matsuyo's expectation, however, this time Tamai does not offer his support for Matsuyo, who desires to go to make prayers instead of visiting the hospital to take care of Sachi. Moreover, Tamai is convinced that people will not understand what a *yuta* says, for *yuta* beliefs and practices are not part of any major institutionalized religions like Buddhism or Christianity. Looking at Buddhist monks passing by on the street from the window of the hospital, where Tamai and Matsuyo are having their discussion, Tamai says to Matsuyo,

“If your religion is that, there is a chance for you to be understood.”

“You mean, ‘*Namu Myōhōrengegyō*’?”

“It doesn't matter which denomination it is. The point is, Buddhism. Christianity is fine, too.”

Not knowing what Tamai meant, Matsuyo gazed at him.<sup>214</sup>

In the end, Matsuyo hesitates and is unable to ask Tamai to help her receive the permission to enter the bases to give her prayers there. Thus, the issue is left unsolved.

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<sup>214</sup> Japanese original: 「あれだったら、まだ分かってもらえるだろうがね」「ナンミョーホーレンゲツキョーですか」「宗派はどうでもよい。要するに仏教だ。キリスト教でもよいな」松代は意味が分からず、玉井を見た。In Ōshiro, “Meiro,” 41-2.

In fact, this is the last time Matsuyo has a conversation with Tamai: immediately after Tamai leaves the hospital, he is run over and killed by a car.

After Tamai has passed away, yet another of Matsuyo's colleagues at the club, Junko, begins to support Matsuyo so that she can offer her prayers for Sachi, and also for Tamai, at the *uganju* inside the Kadena Air Base. There are, however, many obstacles that delay the process. It turns out that Junko and Matsuyo need permission from the Defense Facilities Administration and to obtain it, they first need to discuss the issue with the new Cultural Affairs Division director, who has replaced Tamai after his death in the accident. Unable to understand each other, the new director and Matsuyo cannot reach an agreement. From Matsuyo's perspective, the director's explanations about the legality of Matsuyo's prayers and "the religiosity of the remains" have nothing to do with her urgent feelings simply to pray at the remains. In addition to his official reasoning, the director has another concern in mind. Just as Tamai was, the director is convinced that unlike other well-known religions, the beliefs and practices about *yuta* will not be understood by the Americans at the Kadena Air Base. Moreover, the director believes that Matsuyo, who looks like "an American to everyone's eyes," will create troubles if she prays in front of the Americans at the bases. In the director's words,

"Americans at the bases would think that a crazy American came in, you know? They might consider her as a disgrace to themselves.....Or, if I were to be skeptical and speculate, they might suspect that it was an act of espionage using somebody of mixed race....."<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> Japanese original: 基地内のアメリカ人は、異常なアメリカ人が来たと思いますよ。彼らの恥になると見るか・・・・・・いや、わるく勘繰れば、混血児をつかって彼らの眼をごまかすことによって、スパイ行為を働くと見なされるか・・・・・・ In Ōshiro, "Meiro," 58. I translated the term "konketsuji" into English as "somebody of mixedrace." Literally the term "konketsu" means "mixed blood."



Upset at these remarks, Matsuyo leaves the office. In the end, Matsuyo makes a desperate decision to shave her hair; she dresses like a Buddhist monk and visits the director once again. Junko is concerned about the outcome of Matsuyo's extraordinary decision. At the same time, however, Junko knows that nothing will stop Matsuyo until she completes what she believes she ought to do. The story ends with Junko's determination to help Matsuyo by making her a robe that she will wear for her negotiation with the director, and possibly, for her prayer inside the base.

### **Postwar Okinawa as a Place of “Collision”**

Having highlighted the two episodes about the *uganju* inside the Kadena Air Base, I would like to argue that these two episodes are part of the major theme of the story: namely, the depiction of Okinawa as a place of “collision.” The term, “collision” (*shōtotsu*), is taken from the story itself, as I will discuss it later. On the one hand, the *uganju* inside the American military base symbolically shows the collision between the U.S. and Okinawa: namely, the issue of land loss in postwar Okinawa. As discussed earlier, people's land and even entire communities, were taken by the Americans to be used as their military bases. Also, I have previously explained that many sacred spaces, such as *utaki*, were damaged and destroyed during the Battle of Okinawa and also during the succeeding postwar period due to various changes that occurred there, including the construction of the American military bases. As the narrative shows, *yuta* have the ability to communicate with the deities at different *utaki* and *uganju* scattered over various parts of Okinawa. With these abilities, it is *yuta* who are tormented by the destruction of these sacred spaces. At the same time, they are the ones who are capable of restoring the voices of what is lost in the midst of the collision of cultural and social

practices.

On the other hand, it should be emphasized that the collision between the U.S. and Okinawa is only a fraction of the entire picture. In fact, what is notable about “Maze” is that the collision in postwar Okinawa is not necessarily depicted as a black and white issue that is simply between the U.S. and Okinawa. This is evident in the fact that Ōshiro made the protagonist a *yuta* of mixed race. In doing so, he shows how the American occupation is an ineradicable part of Okinawan people’s postwar lives. In other words, Okinawans have had to live under the influence of U.S. control over the land and human and material resources of Okinawa. These two episodes about the *uganju* rather reveal the collision of interests among Okinawans. This being said, it is notable that the story does not lump together on the side of Matsuyo all the characters who are Okinawans. In other words, the story is not organized in the way that Matsuyo’s sufferings as a *yuta* represent the conflict between the U.S. and Okinawa per se. What the story shows is the presence of various positions and perspectives among Okinawans in regard to Matsuyo, a *yuta*, and her attachment to the sacred spaces inside the military bases.

Now, one may argue that the collision of interests among Okinawans is the legacy of the American occupation. In fact, it is not uncommon that Okinawan authors directly or indirectly portray the divisions among Okinawan people as having been created by the American occupation. It may be fallacious to say, however, that no divisions ever existed prior to the occupation. It may be more reasonable to think that while all sorts of divisions have always existed in Okinawa, the American occupation created new opportunities for new kinds of collision. As for “Maze,” although the episodes about the

*uganju* inside the American base clearly refer to the land issue in postwar Okinawa, the roots of the collisions depicted in the story are manifold and complex and cannot be reduced simply to the conflict between Okinawa and the U.S.

This being said, one factor to be added to examine the causes of the collisions in “Maze” as well as Ōshiro’s view of *yuta* is reflected in the ways in which the term “collision” is used in the narrative. It was in the word of Junko when she described her image of the peculiar sight of Matsuyo, and Okinawan woman with the looks of a white woman disguised as a monk in a black robe with a butch haircut, giving her prayers at the American military base:

This is just like a car accident. Maybe it’s a collision between ancient times and the present time. Maybe it’s a minor collision between Okinawa and America. “Antiquity is waiting inside the fence!” shouted Matsuyo. Yet, will she really be able to make her way toward there?”<sup>216</sup>

These words by Junko reflect Ōshiro’s view of *yuta* as a manifestation of the collision between what is ancient and what is modern and also the collision between what is Okinawa, Japan, and the U.S. within postwar Okinawa. While the story describes that Matsuyo herself is not so concerned with her identity, or the gap between her inner self and outside looks, Ōshiro portrays, through the character of Matsuyo, the complex realities of postwar Okinawa.

### ***Yuta* Practices as Acts of Resistance**

In the article called “*Yuta to kagaku to shūkyō to*” (*Yuta*, Science, and Religion), Ōshiro discusses his ideas about the social roots for someone to become a *yuta* in the

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<sup>216</sup> Japanese original: これはまったく交通事故みたいなものではないか。古代と現代との衝突事故か。沖縄とアメリカとの接触事故か。金網のなかに古代が待っている、と松代は叫んだが、はたしてそこへ向かって突進することができるか。In Ōshiro, “Meiro,” 61.

context of postwar Okinawa. Firstly, Ōshiro points out the mixture of “what is ancient and what is modern”<sup>217</sup> in Okinawa as follows:

Before spontaneously developing one’s own society and culture from the ancient stage, [Okinawa] was invaded by the Satsuma domain. Skipping the Middle Ages, [Okinawa] became a pre-modern feudal society. While the society was not fully developed, it entered the modern period. Today, on the surface level, [Okinawa] seems to be naturally connected to Japanese and Western societies. However, at the bottom of the human existence, pre-modern or ancient elements are lurking without being fully digested.<sup>218</sup>

For Ōshiro, *yuta* are those who “resist [the state of ambivalence] by bringing out what is ancient” preserved somewhere within their inner selves.<sup>219</sup> Referring to the idea that a *yuta*’s activity is an act of resistance, Ōshiro also states:

I think that the process of human beings making progress can be understood as that of the god and humans becoming gradually apart. In this context, I wonder if the inner life of *yuta* may be an act of resistance against the process. When I say, ‘resistance against progress,’ people tend to have a negative interpretation and immediately think of me as being ‘unscientific.’ However, acknowledging that progress is not necessarily identical to happiness, the inner activity of *yuta* may be a warning rather than a resistance [against progress].<sup>220</sup>

This view of Ōshiro is reflected in his story’s depictions of the conflicting relationships between Matsuyo and others, most notably, the nurses at the hospital.

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<sup>217</sup> Japanese original: 古代的なものと現代的なもの。In Ōshiro, “Yuta to kagaku to shūkyō to,” 22.

<sup>218</sup> Japanese original: 古代的なものから内発的に自分の社会、文化を発達させ得ないうちに薩摩の侵入をうけ、中世をとびこして近世封建社会に突入し、それが未熟なうちに近代にはいり、いまでは表面上いかにも自然に日本や西欧社会につながっている。しかし、人間実在の底には、前近代あるいは古代的なものが、未消化のまま潜んでいると思われる。In Ibid., 22-3.

<sup>219</sup> Japanese original: 古代的なものを突出させて抵抗するときに、ユタになるのではないか。In Ibid., 23.

<sup>220</sup> Japanese original: 人類進歩の過程は神と人間とがしだいに遠ざかる過程だといえると思うが、ユタの内面はあるいはそれに抵抗しているのではあるまいか。進歩への抵抗というと、それをただちに「非科学的」などと否定的解釈でうけとられがちだが、進歩かならずしも幸福でないと観ずれば、ユタの内面の活動は抵抗というより、むしろ警告であるのかも知れない。In Ibid., 20.

From the very beginning, Matsuyo is unsatisfied with how the hospital, in which Sachi is staying, takes care of its patients. For instance, Matsuyo is concerned with the fact that the hospital does not have any *hi nu kan* or that the patients' beds are arranged in a way that their heads point toward the west, which she believes to have ominous effects. As discussed earlier, Matsuyo attempts to convince the nurse in charge of Sachi to rearrange her room settings. The nurse, however, regards Matsuyo's concerns nonsensical and will not listen to her requests.

On the one hand, Matsuyo feels negatively about the nurses at the hospital in general because, ironically, she admires them:

[Matsuyo] could not help but feel jealous of the nurses dressed up in their pure white uniforms working at the large hospital. She utterly respected them. She felt that she could leave the patients to these nurses although they were not doctors.<sup>221</sup>

On the other hand, Matsuyo cannot comprehend the nurse's indifferent attitudes toward Matsuyo's sincere apprehensions for Sachi's wellbeing based on her beliefs. From Matsuyo's perspective, the nurse is not taking care of Sachi properly and adequately.

Matsuyo is further isolated when her boyfriend, Tamai, does not show his understanding as to why she has urgent feelings to pray for Sachi at the military base. For Matsuyo, this is the most urgent thing to do. As a response to Tamai, who claims that Matsuyo is neglecting her responsibility of taking care of her colleague at the hospital by insisting on prayers, Matsuyo tells herself:

I thought that he truly understood *yuta* and even paid much regard to the voices of what made me restless. When it comes to the sick, however, he immediately talks about doctors. About how doctors came before prayers. I agree that doctors are important. I don't think that doctors are totally unnecessary and prayers will

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<sup>221</sup> Japanese original: 大きな病院で看護婦が真っ白な制服制帽に身をかためて働いている姿を見ると、羨ましくてならない。尊敬してしまう。医者でなくても病人をまかせられるという気になる。In Ōshiro, "Meiro," 10.

suffice to cure the diseases. Yet, isn't it also important to offer prayers?  
Otherwise, my mind wouldn't be so restless.<sup>222</sup>

As mentioned earlier, Matsuyo loses her support when Tamai is killed in a car accident.

It can be argued that these two episodes revolve around an actual situation in postwar Okinawa where people can seek support to maintain their wellbeing both from *yuta* and from doctors. An Okinawan proverb, “*Isha hanbun yuta hanbun*” (lit. “half doctors, half *yuta*”), bears testimony to this split-care phenomenon. There are scholarly works that explore the situation. To fully understand the significance of the reference in “Maze” to “half doctors, half *yuta*,” let us take a short detour and look at a study on the topic.

Examining the *yuta* practices in contemporary Okinawa, Ōhashi states, Indigenous shamanism constitutes the *hyōsō bunka* [(basic, or deep, culture)] of Okinawan society and the practice of shamanism still prevails in today's Okinawa. However, the practice is at the same time the ‘*ura bunka*’ [(‘outsider culture’)] that receives little recognition from the society [...]<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> Japanese original: あれほどユタを理解し、ワサめきの声をもよく聴きとってくれているものと思っていたのに、ひとたび病人のことになるとすぐ医者と言う。ウグワンより医者が先と言ってしまう。それは医者は大事だと私も思う。医者が全然不必要で、ウグワンだけで病気が治るというつもりはない。でも、ウグワンも大事でない？でなければ、私の頭にこんなにワサめくはずがない。In Ōshiro, “Meiro,” 33-4.

<sup>223</sup> Japanese original: 土着シャーマニズムは、沖縄社会の基層文化を成し、現在なお根強い力を維持しつつけているが、しかしそれは同時に公共社会から承認されることのない「ウラ文化」としてである（後略）。According to Norman Havens, “The Japanese folklorists borrowed the concept of ‘basic’ (or ‘deep’) culture from the German folklorist Hans Naumann’s *Kultur der Mutterschichten*, one of the streams of thought said later to be employed by the Nazis in their construction of a German racial myth.” In Norman Havens, “The Changing Face of Japanese Folk Beliefs,” in *Folk Beliefs in Modern Japan*, Contemporary Papers on Japanese Religion 3, ed. Norman Havens et al (Tōkyō: Institute for Japanese Culture and Classics, Kokugakuin University, 1994), 17n, under “Folk Beliefs in Modern Japan,” <http://www2.kokugakuin.ac.jp/ijcc/wp/cpjr/folkbeliefs/index.html> (accessed January 24, 2010). Although there is no reference to this particular text by Hans Naumann in Ōhashi’s paper, I interpret the term, *hyōsō bunka*, into basic (deep) culture on the assumption that Ōhashi is borrowing Naumann’s concept.

Based on this idea, Ōhashi explores the relationship between the indigenous shamanism consisting of *yuta* on one extreme and foreign cultures, whose actors are composed of various other agents, on the other. Ōhashi identifies the polarity between the two and defines the basic form of the relationship to be, overall, “the resistance of indigenous shamanism against the invasion of foreign cultures.”<sup>224</sup> By this, Ōhashi does not necessarily suggest that *yuta* beliefs and practices are always in antagonism with foreign cultures. For instance, in regard to the relationship between what is known to be *yuta*’s remedial practices and medical treatment provided by the doctors at hospitals, Ōhashi argues that the practice of *yuta* and the system of hospital care coexist in Okinawa. As the proverb mentioned above suggests, both *yuta*’s religious practices and modern medical treatment are available to people in Okinawa as remedies for those who suffer from mental illness, especially since the 1950s, when the system of psychiatry was first introduced into Okinawa.<sup>225</sup>

The commonality between Ōhashi’s essay and Ōshiro’s “Maze” is that both suggest that *yuta* practice is in part an act of “resistance:” resistance against foreign cultures, including modern medical treatment, in the case of Ōhashi and against a shared sense of detachment from the beliefs about *yuta* among contemporary Okinawans in the case of Ōshiro. In regard to *yuta* practices and medical treatment at hospitals, in Ōhashi’s essay the state of coexistence is emphasized, while in Ōshiro’s “Maze” Matsuyo’s act of resistance is highlighted: Matsuyo will not give up her own beliefs but continue to insist curing her sick colleague with her prayers.

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<sup>224</sup> Japanese original: 外来文化の侵攻に対する土着シャーマニズムの抵抗. In Ōhashi, “Okinawa shāmanizumu no rekishi,” 47.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid., 48.

Previously, I have pointed out that Ōshiro makes a reference to the land issue by setting the *uganju* at which Matsuyo is supposed to offer her prayers inside the Kadena Air Base. Matsuyo's resistance is, however, not directly targeted at the land issue between Okinawa and the U.S. Matsuyo will pray anywhere, depending on the messages that she receives from the deities. Ultimately, what Matsuyo resists is anything that prevents her from being a *yuta* and offering her prayers. In this context, it can be argued that her act of resistance is to protect her personal identity as a *yuta* and that through such a portrayal Ōshiro shows the parallel between Matsuyo's circumstances and social and political situations in postwar Okinawa as we shall see in the following section.

### ***Yuta and the Issue of Identity***

In the previous section, analyzing Ōshiro's essay of "*Yuta*, Science, and Religion," we have discussed the collision between what he calls "what is ancient and what is modern." As for another social cause of the presence of *yuta*, Ōshiro points out that there is "a competition among three cultural patterns of Okinawa, Japan, and the United States" in postwar Okinawa.<sup>226</sup> In the midst of such interwoven cultural patterns, according to Ōshiro, one may lose their sense of value. Here, Ōshiro is focusing on the relationship between the feeling of anxiety that *yuta* tend to have and the issue of turbulent Okinawan identity. In particular, Ōshiro examines the desires shared by *yuta* and *yuta kōyā* (*yuta*'s clients) to have their identity firmly established. Highlighting the tendency among *yuta* to narrate Okinawan people's ethnic origin, Ōshiro states,

My speculation is that in order to overcome the sense of anxiety about a human being's existence (the sense of anxiety due to the loss of identity), [*yuta*] begin to tackle the question of 'who they are,' which leads them to trace further back the

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<sup>226</sup> Japanese original: 沖縄、日本、アメリカという三つの文化パターンのせめぎあい。In Ōshiro, "Yuta to kagaku to shūkyō to," 22.



origin of their ethnicity [...] It seems that the clients of *yuta* (those who buy *yuta*'s religious services) and *yuta* themselves have a certain commonality in terms of their mentality. Beginning with the clients' anxiety (such as diseases), *yuta* assist them to trace their ancestors. To worship one's own ancestors is to prove that their presence is acknowledged, which will then resolve the clients' sense of restlessness.<sup>227</sup>

To summarize, Ōshiro identifies *yuta* beliefs and practices as the act of reconfirming one's sense of self both for *yuta* themselves and their clients and thereby resolving their feelings of anxiety caused by the loss of identity in the midst of the collision among different, or even conflicting, values and cultural and social practices in postwar Okinawa.

The issue of identity in "Maze" is, if any, Matsuyo's identity as a *yuta*. This being said, however, it should be remembered that Matsuyo does not choose to become a *yuta*. Just like she was born to Japanese and American parents regardless of her will, she grew up with the ability to communicate with what she calls *kamisama* ever since she had the first experience of *kami dāri*. The narrative emphatically shows that Matsuyo is simply trying to act in accordance with the irresistible force that urged her to give her prayers. At the same time, I want to emphasize that Matsuyo engages in a deliberate act of resistance when her beliefs and practices as a *yuta* are confronted with denials and contempt, which create Matsuyo's sense of anxiety. The narrative indicated that, regardless of whether Matsuyo herself is aware of it or not, her sense of distress at the hospital grows as she is challenged by different values; in this case the practice of

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<sup>227</sup> Japanese original: そこから私が到達した推論は、一個の人間存在の不安感（アイデンティティー喪失の不安）に発して、それに打ち克つために、「自分は何者か」と問うことへ移り、さらにさかのぼって民族の源をさぐるところにまで行っているのではないか、ということだ。（中略）ユタのクライアント（ユタを買う人）とユタ自身は、精神においてある共通面をもっていると思われる、クライアントの不安（病気など）に発して、その先祖さぐりをユタが手つたうのである。先祖を祀ることはその確認のあかしにほかならず、それがクライアントの不安の解消となる。In Ōshiro, "Yuta to kagaku to shūkyō to," 20-1.

modern medical science and hospital care as opposed to the practice of *yuta*'s prayers.

Confronted by these opposing practices and beliefs, Matsuyo is faced with the question of who she is.

In this sense, it can be argued that the title, "Maze," in part indicates the situation in which Matsuyo loses her sense of direction both literally and figuratively, especially when she is at the hospital. In its literal meaning, the narrative emphatically shows that Matsuyo cannot find her way easily in the hospital:

"I lost my way again," said Matsuyo to Sachi, on her third visit to the hospital. Her apartment was in the downtown area of Naha-city and the hospital was on its outskirts. Yet, the hospital was still within the city and it seemed that one could hardly get lost. In fact, what Matsuyo meant by "way" was the corridors of the hospital. The hospital was so large, and from Matsuyo's perspective, there were also too many words to count.<sup>228</sup>

Matsuyo's lack of a sense of direction at the hospital contrasts sharply with her superb command of finding scattered *uganju* and *utaki* on various locations in Okinawa without anyone's help. As noted previously, Matsuyo had her second *kami dāri* when she was nineteen years old. At that time, Matsuyo alone visited eighteen *uganju* in a single week:

Matsuyo visited these *uganju* without asking anybody for directions. She could confidently conduct the taxi drivers to these places. However, she often lost her way in the corridors of the hospital no matter how many times she visited there. Matsuyo wondered: Is it because there is no *hi nu kan* at the hospital? Most likely, the *kamisama* direct me to *uganju*. This must be what happened to me when I had my first experience of the *kami dāri* when I was seven.<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> Japanese original: 「また道を間違えてね」三回目に来たとき言った。アパートは都心で、病院は郊外にある。とはいえやはり那覇市内で、道を間違えるほどのことはない。松代のいう道とは病院の廊下のことである。なにしろ大きな病院で、病棟も松代にいわせると数えきれないくらいある。In Ōshiro, "Meiro," 8.

<sup>229</sup> Japanese original: それを誰にも道順をきかずに訪ねまわった。タクシーの運転手に自信をもって指図することができた。病院の廊下は幾度通ってもよく間違えるが、それはヒヌカンがないせいだろうか。拝所へはきっと神様が導いてくださるのだ。七歳の初体験の場合もそうであったに違いない。In Ibid., 16.

In this way, Matsuyo literally loses her sense of direction and often finds herself trapped in the labyrinth of corridors at the hospital while she has little difficulty finding prayer spots located at various places with no one's help.

Also, Matsuyo loses her sense of direction at the hospital in its figurative meaning. In other words, she is confronted with different, even opposing values, beliefs, and practices while she is at the hospital. To put another way, in the world of modern medical science, there is little space left for Matsuyo's religious practices, which she believes to be vital for the sick to recover their health. Matsuyo's sense of inferiority toward the nurses is directed in terms of their better command of hospital corridors: In Matsuyo's words, "While I'm confused by the complexity of the hospital corridors, nurses are walking around the hospital in a stately manner." Comparing herself with the nurse, in the eyes of Matsuyo, the nurses "seem very confident and are walking around the hospital in a stately manner. They seem very confident and are so admirable."<sup>230</sup> In Matsuyo's mind, that her plan to give her prayers is stagnated was also linked to how she loses her way in the hospital:

"It's nice that I don't need an uniform to give my prayers," said Matsuyo. Junko could not comprehend what she meant immediately. Soon, however, Junko came up with a coherent interpretation and concluded that Matsuyo was determined to overcome a sense of her inferiority toward Yoshie's nurse uniform by giving her prayers. Matsuyo's plan for prayers was not, however, to go smoothly. Matsuyo already had that premonition on that day, or more precisely, even before she left the hospital. For the first time in a while, Matsuyo took the wrong way on the corridors in the hospital. It was because the designs of all the signs had been changed on the previous day. Nevertheless, it was strange because after the replacement was done, she could find her way one or two times without making any mistakes. She could not figure out where and how she took the wrong way, but by the time she realized this, she was in front of Sachi's room again. She felt

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<sup>230</sup> Japanese original: 廊下の道筋の複雑さに自分がまごまごしているときでも、さっさと歩いている看護婦は堂々としていて見事だ。In Ōshiro, "Meiro," 10.

something ominous. Does this mean that Sachi should never leave the sickroom?  
– Matsuyo felt as if she were Sachi herself, and became anxious.<sup>231</sup>

In sum, that Matsuyo loses her sense of direction inside the hospital figuratively shows that she often loses her way as a *yuta* while she is inside the hospital as well. It is notable that the last conversation between Tamai and Matsuyo, in which Tamai insisted that the *yuta* belief will not be understood by others, also took place at the hospital. There, it is the nurses and doctors who have the authority symbolically shown by their “pure white uniforms” that Matsuyo admires but as no access to.

In fact, being in a uniform is, in the eyes of Matsuyo, a marker of having authority and being superior to those who are not in such clothes. Just as Matsuyo jealously admires nurses, she has ambivalent feelings about uniforms in general. The nurses’ uniforms reassure Matsuyo that she can trust them to take care of Sachi. For instance, when Matsuyo sees the nurses in charge of Sachi outside the hospital in her civilian clothes, Matsuyo has “a random [fit of] anxiety” that “Sachi’s disease, which was supposed to be curable, would never be cured.”<sup>232</sup> At the same time, Matsuyo has feelings of antagonism and inferiority toward the nurses and doctors in their uniforms:

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<sup>231</sup> Japanes original: 「ウグワンには制服も要らないんだから、いいさねえ」これも順子はすぐには呑みこめなかったが、まもなく一通りの解釈をつけたのは、芳江の制服にたいする劣等感をウグワンで克服しようというのだろう、ということであった。ところが、ウグワンは順調に運ばなかった。その予感を松代は、その日のうちに - というよりも、病院を出ないうちに持ったのである。久し振りに病院の道筋を間違えたのだ。それは病院が前の日にすべての標識デザインを改めたからであったのだが、取り替えてから一、二度は間違えずに通ったことがあるのに、不思議なことであった。どこでどう間違えたから、気がついたらまた佐知はもう病院から出るなということであるのか - 自分と佐知とを同じように思いなおして、気になった。 In Ōshiro, “Maze,” 53.

<sup>232</sup> Japanese original: それでは佐知の治るはずの病気も治らないではないか、というやみくもな不安が湧いてきた。 In Ibid., 24.

Matsuyo says to Junko, “When I look at these nurses at the hospital, working in their white uniforms with that arrogant air, I felt like I’ve lost to them.”<sup>233</sup>

Matsuyo’s mixed feelings toward uniforms are not limited to the white gowns of the nurses and doctors at the hospital. For instance, she has similar sentiments toward Tamai’s suit. The following is the scene where Tamai denies Matsuyo’s request to go to the *uganju* at the military base to give her prayers for Sachi instead of going to the hospital to take care of her:

“Prayers are important, but the patients should rather listen carefully to their doctors first and you should take care of Sachi, okay?” said Tamai. He already finished putting on his clothes and was standing. Matsuyo, who was just wearing a slip, looked up at him. She looked at the vivid patterns of his stylish dark blue tie. It was tightly tied around his thick neck. Then there was a white shirt on top of which was his chic, gray suit. His outfit had the same authoritative air, just like those white robes of the doctors at the hospital. It made Matsuyo have a mixed feeling of both security of having something reliable and distressing fear.<sup>234</sup>

Thus on the one hand, Matsuyo respects and relies upon both medical professionals at the hospital and Tamai. On the other hand, she feels threatened by what she thinks of their magisterial ways of behaving and speaking.

Matsuyo had a similar mixture of feelings about policemen’s uniforms, as opposed to other uniforms of Buddhist monks’ robes, of which she seems to feel in awe without necessarily fearing them. When Tamai is run over by a car, Matsuyo witnesses

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<sup>233</sup> Japanese original: 「病院の看護婦があ．．．．．」 (中略) 「白衣を着て、いばったような顔して仕事していると、負けたような気がするんだよね」. In Ōshiro, “Maze,” 48-9.

<sup>234</sup> Japanese original: 「ウグワンも大事だろうが、それより病人はまず医者 of 言うことをよく聴いて看病しなくちゃ」洋服を着終わって立っている。松代はシュミーズだけを纏って見上げる。玉井のネクタイの紺色のしゃれた柄が鮮明に眼にうつる。ネクタイが太い首をしめている。白いワイシャツがあり、グレイのシックな背広がしっかりと位置を占めて、病院の医者 of 白衣とおなじ權威をおびて見える。頼りになる思いと締めつけてくるような怖さを、ごちゃまぜに感じさせた。 In Ibid., 33.

the accident because it happens right after Tamai has left the hospital where he had been talking with Matsuyo: “Tamai’s body was carried away. However, Matsuyo forgot to follow him. She was obsessed by the place of accident. She felt as if she were tethered to it.”<sup>235</sup> When the policemen come, Matsuyo is still there:

There was a moment when Matsuyo could not be certain whether these policemen wrapped up in their uniforms were human beings. The policemen were using measures to deal with the spirit of the place where Tamai’s spirit had been killed. Are these policemen, who are fortifying themselves in their uniforms with measures in their hands, surely able to handle the spirit, which ordinary human beings – those who thronged around the area and even Matsuyo herself – can do nothing about?

The procession of the monks had gone far away and could barely be seen. Matsuyo suddenly suspected that the spirit of Tamai followed them. She thought: Or, is it still around here, being disconcerted? Matsuyo could not see his spirit. She wished that she were capable of seeing spirits at a moment like this. Matsuyo wondered: Maybe, is it because these policemen are intimidating us with their uniform – because they are intimidating even the spirit of the place where Tamai had been killed – that Tamai’s spirit remains unable to appear? Matsuyo wanted those monks to return to the place right away. She wanted them to come back there and replace the policemen. Now, who is it that can save the spirit of Tamai? The monks or the policemen?”<sup>236</sup>

These are the same monks that Tamai points out when he is trying to convince Matsuyo that the *yuta* practices will not be easily understood by people. Tamai explains that if

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<sup>235</sup> Japanese original: 玉井のからだは運び去られた。しかし、松代は従っていくことを忘れた。その場所にこだわってしまった。場所に自分が縛りつけられている思いであった。In Ōshiro, “Maze,” 44.

<sup>236</sup> Japanese original: 制服に包まれた警官たちは人間だろうか、と疑う瞬間があった。玉井の霊を殺した場所の霊を、警官がメジャーで処理している。なみの人間には - 群がっている人にも、松代にさえもどうにもならない場所の霊を、制服に身を固めてメジャーを持った警官が、間違いなく処理し得るということか。坊主の行列ははるか遠くに小さくなっていた。玉井の霊があゝの列について行ったかと、松代はふと疑った。いや、それともまだこのあたりで落ちつけないでいるのか。松代には見えない。こういうとき見えればよいのに。ひょっとして、警官が制服であたりを威圧しているから - 玉井を殺した場所の霊をさえ威圧しているから、玉井の霊が浮かんでこないのか。坊主たちがいま戻ってくればよいのに、と思った。戻ってきて坊主が警官と代わればよいのに。玉井の霊をいま救いうる者は誰か。坊主か警官か・・・・・。In Ibid., 45.

Matsuyo's beliefs belong to major religions like Buddhism, there is a chance for her request to be accepted by the authority. In this context, it is conceivable that Matsuyo has the same mixture of respect for and rejection of these monks. Notably, however, Matsuyo is not overwhelmed by the uniforms of the monks as she is by those of the nurses and doctors at the hospital and policemen at the accident scene. Junko is at first perplexed at Matsuyo's reactions to these monks, but finally realizes that Matsuyo "saw something comforting in the procession of the monks."<sup>237</sup>

To summarize my discussion of "Maze" concerning the issue of identity, the narrative is, first of all, not about how Matsuyo constructs her Okinawan identity as opposed to being an American. Although the episodes about the *uganju* inside the American base seems to indicate the land conflict between Okinawa and the U.S., the text is not politicized and Matsuyo's struggle cannot be reduced to the issue of conflicting relationships between Okinawa and America. It is about the process in which Matsuyo ultimately sets her mind on following her own beliefs and practices as a *yuta* in the face of different and opposing values. As figuratively shown in the fact that Matsuyo often loses her sense of direction at the hospital, she is confronted with many obstacles and confused by different sets of values on her way finally determined not to give up on her prayers. This is once again described through a comparison between the nurses' familiarity with the corridors of the hospital and Matsuyo's lack thereof. Matsuyo says to herself:

Everywhere at the hospital, those nurses in their matching white uniforms are coming and going confidently with that look of their determination never to

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<sup>237</sup> Japanese original: 坊主の行列に気が落ちつけるものを見たのだろう。In Ōshiro, "Maze," 49.

commit any errors in their hospital works. Fine, I'm going to give my prayers without making any mistakes, too.<sup>238</sup>

In this way, Matsuyo decides that as the nurses demonstrate their command over the hospital corridors, she will perform her prayers flawlessly.

In short, I contend that the issue of identity in “Maze” is that of Matsuyo’s personal identity, not social or national one. At the same time, however, it must not be forgotten that the line between personal and social/national identity may not be so clearly drawn, considering that all individuals are also social beings. Acknowledging the overlap between personal and social/national identity, let us extend the idea and see if Matsuyo’s struggle is interpreted as her struggle for Okinawan identity as opposed to an American or Japanese one. Matthew Allen has observed that the *yuta* practices in contemporary Okinawa and states that

within Okinawa, shamans (*yuta*), folk healers (*niigan*), “got people” (*kaminchu*), diviners (*toki*) and other indigenous healers/religious specialists employ symbols that have cultural connotations in their diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment of cases. The symbols they employ, however, relate to spirits, ancestors, after-death experiences, medium-ship, and family genealogies; in short, symbols of an Okinawan world, as opposed to those of a “scientific” “modern” Japanese world.<sup>239</sup>

As Allen’s remark shows, *yuta* carry beliefs and practices of what is native to Okinawa. It is also true that new practices and systems brought to Okinawa from Japan have had a great impact on traditional *yuta* practices. For instance, as pointed out earlier, before psychiatry was introduced to Okinawa in the 1950s, people visited *yuta* to seek their support and advice.

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<sup>238</sup> Japanese original: 前後左右を看護婦が同じような白衣を着て、病院のことは絶対に間違えないぞという顔で、自信ありげに行き交う。よし、私も間違えずにウグワンをするんだから。 In Ōshiro, “Maze,” 53.

<sup>239</sup> Allen, “Therapies or Resistance?” 224.



Considering that *yuta* employ “symbols of an Okinawan world, as opposed to those of a ‘scientific’ ‘modern’ Japanese world,” one may possibly interpret the narrative’s portrayal of the collision between Matsuyo’s *yuta* practices and hospital care based on modern medical science as figuratively showing the collision between Okinawa and Japan. Leith Morton, for instance, sees such conflicting relationships between Okinawa and America and Okinawa and Japan in Ōshiro’s *yuta* narratives. In his abstract of a conference talk entitled “Yuta as Postcolonial Hybrid in Ōshiro Tatsuhiko’s Fiction,” Morton analyzes the stories collected in *The Voices from the Afterlife*, which includes “Maze,” and asserts that

Yuta can be read in Ōshiro’s fiction as symbolic of the hybridity of contemporary Okinawan identity, and the multifold dilemmas arising from this. Such women (*yuta* are almost always depicted as female in Ōshiro’s writing) often seek to establish a stable sense of self amid competing self-images of Okinawans as victims of Japanese (or Yamato imperialism), American Cold War imperialism, and also struggle to create a sense of what it is to be Okinawan, given that the myriad islands of Okinawa are all microcultures in their own right with their competing languages and ethnicities.<sup>240</sup>

I agree that Okinawan women who are depicted as *yuta* in Ōshiro’s narratives in *The Voices from the Afterlife* symbolically manifest “the hybridity of contemporary Okinawan identity” and also that they “often seek to establish a stable sense of self.” However, I argue that what Morton calls “competing self-images of Okinawans” as victims of Japanese or American imperialism are less manifest, if not absent, in the narratives.

As for a *yuta* figure’s role as being “symbolic of the hybridity of contemporary Okinawan identity,” in the case of “Maze,” Matsuyo’s background shows that she is indeed, figuratively, the portrait of a “hybrid” postwar Okinawan. In the story, people are

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<sup>240</sup> Leith Morton, “Yuta as Postcolonial Hybrid in Ōshiro Tatsuhiko’s Fiction,” abstract, *ASCJ 2005 Abstracts* (June 2005): 4.

often perplexed at Matsuyo's identity because there are many "contradictions" about Matsuyo, which prevents others from easily identifying who Matsuyo really is: As mentioned earlier, Matsuyo was born in Okinawa as a child of mixed race between a Japanese mother and an American father. She was raised by her Okinawan grandmother and grew up in Okinawa. From the portrayals of the narrative, it can be concluded that Matsuyo is culturally an Okinawan woman, eating Okinawan food, speaking the Okinawan dialect, and performing the customs of Okinawa. From others' perspective, however, she is a white American woman dressed in Okinawan traditional clothes. Besides, she is a practitioner of Okinawan folk religion while normally working at a club as a hostess. The story ends with a hint of her identity growing further complicated in the eyes of many as she decides to shave her hair and dress like a Buddhist monk to offer her prayers at the *uganju* inside the American military base.

It is notable that Ōshiro makes these aspects of "hybridity" about Matsuyo peripheral in the story. In doing so, he successfully shows that Matsuyo is drawn into the vortex of conflicting beliefs, values, and customs and her everyday life as a *yuta* are greatly affected by the collision of differences. Analyzing Ōshiro's works on *yuta*, Nakahodo Masanori contends,

We may conclude that the characteristic of Ōshiro's *yuta*-literature is not in its reference to the fact that a person becomes a *yuta* or that *yuta* have the special ability to make predictions but in his portrayal of *yuta* being inevitably, regardless of their will, situated within the controversial political and social environment.<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> Japanese original: 大城のユタ作品の特質は、人がユタになる、あるいはユタが特別な予知能力を発揮することに触れたところにあるのではなく、ユタが、否応なく先鋭な政治・社会的な場に身をおいてしまうところにある、といっているだろう。In Nakahodo, "Sengo Okinawa bungaku ni miru yuta o meguru monogatari," cited in Goya, "Ōshiro Tatsuhiko mihappyō sakuhin ni tsuite," 44.

Nakahodo's argument is to the point, reflecting Ōshiro's view of *yuta* as a "scapegoat" of her contemporaries.

In sum, "Maze" is primarily a narrative about Matsuyo's pursuit of her personal identity. In this pursuit, however, Matsuyo is affected by the socio-political circumstances of Okinawa at that time. In this way, Ōshiro portrays the intersection between personal and social/national identity of an individual. What is more, Ōshiro shows that there is a parallel between what happens to Matsuyo and to the people of Okinawa at large, who have been confronted with the issue of postwar Okinawan identity. Namely, Matsuyo's determination to follow her role as a *yuta* is one way to establish postwar Okinawan identity. As Matsuyo often loses her way in the hospital, she is faced with many obstacles because of her identity as a *yuta*. In the end, however, with her friend's understanding and support, Matsuyo decides to be true to her *yuta* identity. Her spirituality is thus a tool for Matsuyo to manifest who she is and be herself in the midst of conflicting values and ideas.

### CHAPTER 3

#### VOICES FROM THE PAST

This section on “Hahatachi onnatachi” (Mothers/Women, 1982) by Nakandakari Hatsu explores the narrative’s depiction of how the survivors of traumatic events, in this case the Battle of Okinawa in 1945, remember, narrate, and transmit their past experiences. In “Mothers/Women,” wartime memories of an elderly woman known as Grandma Kamado are narrated in an unconventional, almost supernatural, manner through a nightmare/flashback whose scenes are visible to a protagonist, Misa, a young Okinawan woman in her twenties. I will examine the significance of this portrayal of a memory transplant through the mutually observable nightmare/flashback from a perspective of memory studies. More specifically, I use Dori Laub’s research on testimonies from Holocaust survivors as an analytical framework. Laub points out the presence of “an imperative need to *tell* and thus to come to *know* one’s story” in each survivor.<sup>242</sup> At the same time, he acknowledges the challenge that these survivors confront in their attempts at satisfying such imperative. He states:

This imperative to tell and to be heard can become itself an all-consuming life task. Yet no amount of telling seems ever to do justice to this inner compulsion. There are never enough words or the right words, there is never enough time or the right time, and never enough listening or the right listening to articulate the story that cannot be fully captured in *thought, memory, and speech*.<sup>243</sup>

As a consequence, he observes that

the imperative to tell the story of the Holocaust is inhabited by the impossibility of telling, and therefore, silence about the truth commonly prevails [...] Some

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<sup>242</sup> Dori Laub, “An Event without a Witness: Truth, Testimony and Survival,” in Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), 78.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

have hardly spoken of it, but even those who have talked incessantly, feel that they managed to say very little that was heard.<sup>244</sup>

In this way, the “impossibility of telling” deadlocks the communication between those who construct narratives of the past, whether it is an individual or a collective one, and those who receive such narratives. Moreover, the issue is further complicated in the case of remembering traumatic events, which usually occurs regardless of one’s will. Being confronted with the challenging task of fully accounting for raw emotions and experiences of atrocious events, one may need creative methods both to narrate the past *and* to capture such voices.

Having said that, the act of remembering wartime experiences described in “Mothers/Women” captures this complex interplay between the remembering subjects and receivers of such narratives in the face of various impediments of retrieving memories of traumatic events. Referring to Pierre Janet’s research on memories, Bassel A. van der Kolk and Onno van der Hart summarize what Janet observes as the major difference between “traumatic memory” and “narrative memory”:

in contrast to narrative memory, which is a social act, traumatic memory is inflexible and invariable. Traumatic memory has no social component; it is not addressed to anybody, the patient does not respond to anybody; it is a solitary activity.<sup>245</sup>

Grandma Kamado’s “traumatic memory” does not fit into this scheme as the memory is shared by Misa. Most notably, the narrative obscures this observed distinction between “narrative memory” and “traumatic memory” by portraying Grandma Kamado’s nightmare/flashback in a form that is visible to other.

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<sup>244</sup> Laub, “An Event without a Witness,” 79.

<sup>245</sup> Bassel A. van der Kolk and Onno van der Hart, “The Instructive Past: The Flexibility of Memory and the Engraving of Trauma,” in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Carth (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 163.

In other words, Grandma Kamado's "traumatic memory" becomes "a social act."

**Author: Nakandakari Hatsu**

Nakandakari Hatsu was born in Urazoe-city, Okinawa, in 1950. Born after the war, she began her career in literary production in the 1980s. In *Gendai bungaku ni miru Okinawa no jigazō* (Okinawan in Contemporary Novels and Dramas, 1996), Okamoto analyzes six stories by Okinawan female writers including Nakandakari's "Mothers/Women" in the chapter entitled "Josei to jiritsu" (Women and Independence). Okamoto states, "As for the most salient feature of literature in the post-reversion period, we must point out the emergence of female writers."<sup>246</sup> According to him, "The period of the 1980s in Okinawa is, so to speak, the season for female writers."<sup>247</sup> Okamoto points out that this can be attributed to the improvement in Okinawan postwar economy in the 1980s and an increase in the number of literary prizes, which resulted in creating more opportunities for Okinawan writers to publish their works.<sup>248</sup> Under such circumstances, more and more women began to advance their career in various fields, including literary production.<sup>249</sup>

As for Nakandakari, she has won two literary works. In 1981, her short story, "Yakusoku" (Promise, 1981), won the ninth *Ryūkyū Shinpō tanpen shōsetsu shō* (*Ryūkyū Shinpō Prize for Short Stories*). In 1982, Nakandakari received the eight *Shin Okinawa bungaku shō* (New Okinawan Literature Prize) for her "Mothers/Women," which first

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<sup>246</sup> Japanese original: 「施政権返還後の文学」で最も目立った特色を言うならば、女性作家の輩出をとりあげなければならないだろう。In Okamoto, *Gendai bungaku ni miru Okinawa no jigazō*, 26.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid., 222.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid.

appeared in the literary magazine called *Shin Okinawa bungaku* (New Okinawan Literature) in 1982.

### **Story: “Mothers/Women”**

The protagonists of “Mothers/Women” are two young Okinawan women in their twenties named Misa and Kazuko. After graduating together from a same high school, they both work at the village office in Okinawa. Set in the postwar period, the story revolves around the historical event of locating the Japan Self-Defense Forces (hereafter, SDF) in Okinawa after the 1972 reversion of Okinawa. The presence of SDF in postwar Okinawa was troubling to many Okinawans as it evoked memories of atrocious, traumatic events during the war.

As for the Battle of Okinawa, Shinzato Keiji and others indicate that

it is commonly believed that the Japanese military designed its strategies for the Battle of Okinawa in accordance with its desire to delay as much as possible the ground battle with the U.S. Forces in mainland Japan.<sup>250</sup>

What makes the Battle of Okinawa, the only ground battle fought in Japan, one of the most traumatic events in the history of Okinawa is that the residents suffered from aggressions by both the Americans and the Japanese, whom many Okinawans had falsely believed to be their protectors. For instance, there were many horrendous cases in which local residents were killed by the Japanese soldiers when they considered the locals a hindrance to the operation. Also, when the Japanese were forced to retreat into the Southern part of the island of Okinawa at the end of May 1945, many civilians who had

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<sup>250</sup> Japanese original: 沖縄戦における日本軍の作戦は、米軍の本土上陸をできるかぎり引き延ばすことにあったといわれている。In Shinzato Keiji 新里恵二, Taminato Tomoaki 田港朝昭, and Kinjō Seitoku 金城正篤, *Okinawa-ken no rekishi* 沖縄県の歴史, Kenshi shirīzu 47 (Tōkyō: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1972), 215.

already been evacuated to the caves were expelled, robbed of food, and slaughtered by the Japanese soldiers. These incidents left a lasting impression on the people of Okinawa, which is observable in various postwar movements including the ones that were opposed to the location of SDF in Okinawa.

Another character who plays a significant role in the story is an elderly woman known as Grandma Kamado, who lives in Misa's neighborhood. Grandma Kamado has lost her family during the war and lives alone after the war. The first significant event in the story is Grandma Kamado's visit to the village office, where both Misa and Kazuko work, in order to plead furiously not to allow the members of SDF, whom Grandma Kamado calls *Yamato no heitai* (Japanese soldiers), in her field. This reflected a historical circumstance in Okinawa after the 1972 reversion. After the disposition of SDF in Okinawa was decided, there were occasions in which the members of SDF were dispatched to farmlands owned by the locals to assist farming. These projects were not necessarily welcomed by Okinawan residents. In particular, those who were against locating SDF in Okinawa viewed these programs merely as a strategy to win Okinawans to accept SDF's presence in postwar Okinawa.

Grandma Kamado's tenacious protest surprises many, including Misa and her mother, Toyo, as Grandma Kamado behaves as if she were out of her mind during the protest. Being concerned with Grandma Kamado's wellbeing, Toyo finally decided to invite Grandma Kamado to live together with her and Misa despite Misa's strong opposition. Since Misa's father has passed away and her young brother moves to mainland Japan, Toyo's decision leads to the formation of a relationship among three women of different generations, Grandma Kamado, Toyo, and Misa. It is in this context



that Misa encounters bits and pieces of Grandma Kamado's wartime experiences through sharing of past memories of Grandma Kamado that appeared to her in her nightmare/flashback.

One night, awakened by Grandma Kamado's scream, Misa goes to the room where Grandma Kamado sleeps. When Misa comes, Grandma Kamado begins to tell her that her children are dying right next to her. Misa feels the chill on her spine as she vividly envisions supposedly the ghosts of these children lying down beside Grandma Kamado. In this scene, Grandma Kamado mingles the past and present as she transmits past experiences represented in her dream by communicating it to Misa. Since this unaccountable experience Misa becomes greatly influenced, and even haunted, by Grandma Kamado's past. After this night in which Misa experienced Grandma Kamado's memory of the war, Misa repeatedly has nightmares of war.

### **Memory Transplant**

Grandma Kamado's nightmare may be explained within the framework of trauma. On the experience of trauma, Cathy Caruth states that to "be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event."<sup>251</sup> It seems that Grandma Kamado is "possessed" by her horrific experience of witnessing her children's death by an air-raid attack right next to her while she herself survives. Due to this catastrophic experience, Grandma Kamado may be suffering from "(survivor) guilt" as many survivors of atrocious events do.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> Cathy Caruth, "Trauma and Experience: Introduction," in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 4-5.

<sup>252</sup> Kryustal Henry, "Trauma and Aging: A Thirty-Year Follow-Up," in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 77.

Under such circumstances, it is likely that Grandma Kamado is undergoing a “returning traumatic dream,” which is purely and inexplicably, the literal return of the event against the will of the one it inhabits.”<sup>253</sup> This phenomenon is not sufficient to explain, however, the significance of the narrative’s unique description of Grandma Kamado’s nightmare, whose scenes are inextricably visible to others. With this portrayal of a memory transmission via a mutually observable nightmare/flashback, the author addresses the issue of how to narrate and transmit past experiences. Namely, the narrative points to the problem of discrepancy that is created in the process of representing the past. Once the remembering subject decides to reconstruct the past as it was despite the fact that one has only limited access even to one’s own past, he or she may confront the issue of the availability of any means of communication to fully account for the past event to others. Identifying the creation of narratives as an act of recollection, Mieke Bal points out that “the ‘story’ the person remembers is not identical to the one she experienced.” She observes that “when put into words, they [(memories)] are rhetorically overworked so that they can connect to an audience”<sup>254</sup> A similar thing can be said about narrating dreams. When one desires to share our dreams with others, he or she needs to re-organize what is in the dream into a coherent story. This is not always a simple task, and it is possible that one feels compelled to focus upon making a coherent, “understandable,” narrative rather than describing rather chaotic, random scenes as they appeared in the dream. In the case of Grandma Kamado’s dream, the scenes that appeared in her dream are transmitted directly to Misa, who supposedly views

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<sup>253</sup> Caruth, “Trauma and Experience: Introduction,” 5.

<sup>254</sup> Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 2nd ed (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 147.

exactly what Grandma Kamado sees in her own dream. Notably, the author has created a radically different form of transmission: Grandma Kamado's dream is shared by Misa without any process of narrative construction whatsoever.

In this way, Grandma Kamado "narrates" her past not through written or oral narratives but through her nightmare. In other words, Grandma Kamado in a way "speaks" her past experiences via her dream. Grandma Kamado, and the receiver of the memory, Misa. This unconventional kind of "narrative act" through a nightmare is "a [new] way of gaining access to a knowledge that has not yet attained the form of 'narrative memory.'"<sup>255</sup> How effective is this way of memory transmission? Projected onto her nightmare are only pieces of Grandma Kamado's past, and therefore, her story in its entirety is still untold. Nonetheless, this replication of memory pieces via communicable dreams is effective, or probably one of the most effective, means of communication because it allows memory producers to replicate scenes exactly as they have experienced them, which in turn enables memory receivers to experience these replicated past moments beyond time and space. Indeed, since Grandma Kamado and Misa observe supposedly the same scenes, the medium of an extraordinarily frightful dream allows Grandma Kamado to practice a memory *transplant* instead of a memory *transmission*.

### **The Act of Collective Recollection**

Furthermore, the narrative's description of Grandma Kamado's memory transmission makes the act of recollecting traumatic events a collective experience. As

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<sup>255</sup> Cathy Caruth, "Recapturing the Past: Introduction," in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 155.

noted earlier, “traumatic memory” is usually “a solitary activity.”<sup>256</sup> Contrarily, with the unique effect of the nightmare whose images are transmittable to others, Grandma Kamado is able to confront her traumatic past collaboratively with others.

It should be noted, however, that Grandma Kamado may have a nightmare regardless of her will. Caruth states, referring to Sigmund Freud, that the “traumatic nightmare [...] occupies a space to which willed access is denied.”<sup>257</sup> It is notable and intriguing, however, that Nakandari, by making Grandma Kamado’s nightmare a transmittable one, manages to make her “traumatic reenactment” a collaborative act. What is the significance of this portrayal?

A communicable nightmare of this nature may build, as Kai Erikson has suggested, the “community” of those who have shared experiences.<sup>258</sup> He states that trauma shared can serve as a source of communality in the same way that common languages and common backgrounds can. There is a spiritual kinship there, a sense of identity, even when feelings of affection are deadened and the ability to care numbed.<sup>259</sup> Here, Erikson speaks of a community among those who have the same traumatic experiences. Furthermore, by using the term “community” he does not refer to “the easy comradeship one often finds among those who live through telling experiences together.”<sup>260</sup> What is notable about the relationship between Grandma Kamado and Misa is that it is between those who had the experience of the Battle of Okinawa and those who

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<sup>256</sup> Van der Kolk and Van der Hart, “The Intrusive Past: The Flexibility of Memory and the Engraving of Trauma,” 153.

<sup>257</sup> Caruth, “Recapturing the Past: Introduction,” 152.

<sup>258</sup> Kai Erikson, “Notes on Trauma and Community,” in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 185.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*

did not. Aware of these differences, however, I argue that by portraying Grandma Kamado's recollection in the form of a transmittable nightmare, Nakandakari may be stressing the importance of building such a community to remember the past overcoming generational gaps.

In regard to a traumatic event, Caruth contends that "Not having been fully integrated as it occurred, the event cannot become, as [Pierre] Janet says, a 'narrative memory' that is integrated into a completed story of the past."<sup>261</sup> As a consequence, the history that a flashback tells [...] is, therefore, a history that literally *has no place* neither in the past, in which it was not fully experienced, nor in the present, in which its precise images and enactments are not fully understood.<sup>262</sup>

Instead of having any "completed story of the past," Grandma Kamado narrates her past through a nightmare. This transmittable dream, presenting the past scenes reconstructed through Grandma Kamado's recollection for the sake of the young generation, locates Grandma Kamado's personal history in the present moment. In other words, her history finds a place in the present in that it is experienced by Misa, who has no personal experience of the war.

One may argue that it is questionable as to what extent Misa "understands" Grandma Kamado's past experiences. Indeed, Grandma Kamado's dream shows only bits and pieces of her past. Moreover, as Grandma Kamado apparently has the nightmare against her will, Misa just happens to encounter Grandma Kamado's past. At least, however, the re-creation of past moments in the form of a nightmare that is visible to others allows the mutual re-witnessing of past events across generations, which may

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<sup>261</sup> Caruth, "Recapturing the Past: Introduction," 153.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid.

facilitate the young generation's attempt at making sense of their elders' past. Thus, the significance of Grandma Kamado's memory transplant lies in the chain of events that enables Misa, the recipient of the memory, to become a *witness* of the event that has occurred to Grandma Kamado. On the one hand, this involuntary transplant of her nightmare allows Grandma Kamado to review her own past although it is unclear to what extent she is able to remain outside of the event without becoming absorbed in it again. At the same time, it bestows on Misa the role of a witness to a past event experienced by Grandma Kamado. The re-creation of a past moment in the form of a nightmare that is visible to someone else therefore generates an exchange of witnessing across generations. It is an optimal use of a past moment because it allows Misa to be both the outsider and insider of the recalled moment.

### **The Challenge of Memory Consumption**

However, this presumably "successful" communication between Grandma Kamado and Misa on the literary surface belies the difficulty of narrating the past in real life. To put it in another way, it is questionable as to what extent various means of communication that are available to us at this point have the same effect as this replication and transplant of past memories through a nightmare does. In real life, it seems not feasible to re-create past events as this collectively observable nightmare does. In the story, only Misa is given the opportunity of witnessing pieces of Grandma Kamado's past through a nightmare. Hence it is not so surprising that Misa is portrayed as eventually showing most compassion toward Grandma Kamado. At the same time, it is intriguing that, among the characters of the young generation, Misa in particular becomes the witness of Grandma Kamado's past. It is in this context that I would like to turn my

discussion from the production of memory to its consumption. Whether the personal histories of the survivors of traumatic events find a place in the present depends not only on how their memories are transmitted but also on how they are received by later generations. When the remembering subjects has limited access to his or her own past and the represented past is not identical to the actual experience, memory receivers play a significant role in overcoming these limitations.

For a memory to be successfully transmitted across generational boundaries, the limitations that memory producers encounter must be supplemented by the memory receivers. This dynamic of memory transmission seems to be also the issue that Nakandakari stresses. Laub states:

To a certain extent, the interviewer-listener takes on the responsibility for bearing witness that previously the narrator felt he bore alone, and therefore could not carry out [...] It is the encounter and the coming together between the survivor and the listener, which makes possible something like a repossession of the act of witnessing. This joint responsibility is the source of the reemerging truth.

Memory producers and consumers who many become memory re-creators themselves need to collaborate in order for the past to be relived and to be transmitted generation after generation. Citing Paul Chodoff, Henry Krystal states that the aftereffects observable among Holocaust survivors include “their inability to re-experience and describe some of their harmful experiences [...]”<sup>263</sup> By listening to memory producers’ stories, memory receivers share this “re-experience” although this mechanism brings us back to the issue of “the impossibility of telling.” After all, each “re-experience” is unique in its own way and may not be analogous to what the memory producer initially experienced.

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<sup>263</sup> Henry, “Trauma and Aging,” 76.

“Mothers/Women” shows while it is important to share memories across generational boundaries, this collective recollection – the collaboration between memory creators and receivers – is not without difficulties. As I have explored, memory transmission via Grandma Kamado’s nightmare facilitates Misa’s understanding of Grandma Kamado, especially the recognition that her past experiences generates sufferings in her present life. Misa’s initial reaction to Grandma Kamado has been rather distanced. Before that night of memory transmission, Misa has been unable to fathom the significant impact of Grandma Kamado’s experiences during the war. That Misa’s attempt to know Grandma Kamado’s past is challenged may be due to the generational gap between them. If recollection can be understood as a creative process in the present moment, then those who lived during the wartime period “create” their past narratives. Their creation may nonetheless be based largely on their actual experiences. By contrast, the young generation is often challenged by their lack of direct experiences when they attempt to make sense of the past events to which they have had access only through what Marianne Hirsch calls “an imaginative investment and creation.”<sup>264</sup> In regard to Misa’s “postmemory,” it seems that direct experience of a past event through Grandma Kamado’s nightmare is necessary. She comes fully to understand that Grandma Kamado’s inexorable past is projected upon her protest at the village office only after encountering a wartime scene in her nightmare. Although Misa has shown a sense of empathy for Grandma Kamado early on, it is questionable as to what extent she is able to see the link between the past and present without the direct, non-verbal memory transmission through Grandma Kamado’s nightmare.

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<sup>264</sup> Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 22.



Indeed, the young generation, due to their lack of experiences, may not appreciate what their elders have gone through. I argue that “Mothers/Women” is one of the texts that address the difficulties of transmitting narratives of wartime experiences from generation to generation and of listening to the unspeakable voices of war survivors. Shinjō Ikuo states that various attempts at narrating the Battle of Okinawa have been made since the 1970s in Okinawa, which corresponds to the time setting of “Mothers/Women.”<sup>265</sup> According to Shinjō, it is also around that time that many began to point out the emerging difficulties of sharing memories of the war.<sup>266</sup> The gap between those who had wartime experiences and those who did not further increased in the 1980s. Under such circumstances, Shinjō observes that postwar Okinawan literary texts have attempted to hear the voices that have been silenced.<sup>267</sup>

### **Intergenerational Relationships in Okinawan Fiction**

In addition to Ōshiro’s “Maze” and Nakandakari’s “Mothers/Women,” I have examined other postwar Okinawan literary works. In particular, I selected the short stories and novels that received either regional or national literary prizes. The former includes New Okinawan Literary Prize (since 1975), Ryūkyū Shinpō Short Stories Prize (1973), and Kyūshū and Okinawan Art Festival Literary Prize (1970). My reading of these major Okinawan literatures produced in the 1970s and 1980s shows that many Okinawan

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<sup>265</sup> Shinjō Ikuo 新城郁夫, *Okinawa bungaku to yū kuwadate: kattōsuru gengo, shintai, kioku* 沖縄文学という企て：葛藤する言語・身体・記憶. Tōkyō: Inpaku to Shuppankai, 2003, 51.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid.

<sup>267</sup> Japanese original: 語ることさえ封じられて蹂躪されつづけている人達の声、その声の所在を探し求め、そしてその語らぬ声を届きなご戦争を語りつごうとする困難な営為、そのことを問い続けてきたのが戦後の沖縄文学であったように思えるし、また、これからもそうであるだろうと思う。In Ibid, 48.

authors commonly portray interactions among Okinawan people across generational boundaries.<sup>268</sup> What is notable about these literary representations of intergenerational relationships is the highlighted roles of elderly Okinawan men and women. In particular the figure of an elderly woman is a salient and prevalent feature that many authors employ in their narratives.<sup>269</sup>

The issue of the generational gap is often raised in both scholarly and general discussions of war and memory in the postwar period. Moreover, the act of memory transmission in both Okinawa and mainland Japan is often discussed within specific generational frameworks. On this point, Franziska Seraphim observes that

The concept of generational cohorts was perhaps most widely used to capture competing views of past and present in the context of demographic change, both by the war memory organizations and in the wider public discourse.<sup>270</sup>

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<sup>268</sup> “Hone” (1973) by Shima Tsuyoshi; “Sotetsu no mura” (1977) by Arasaki Kyōtarō; “Satōkibi” (1979) by Taba Mitsuko; “Kowareta Tokei” (1979) by Nakawaka Naoko; “Machi no hi ni” (1979) by Sakiyama Tami; “Kamo no yukue” (1981) by Ikeda Masatoshi; “Iro wa nioe to” (1981) by Minami Ankan; “Ikoku” (1981) by Yoshizawa Yōki; “Hotaru” (1982) by Kobashi Kei; “Furūto o fuku shōnen” by Yamasato Teiko; “Nūma birasu” (1989) by Miyazato Shōan; “Umi hashiru” (1989) by Nakawaka Naoko; “Hahatachi onnatachi” (1982) by Nakandakari Hatsu; “Naikai no kaze” (1984) by Yamazato Teiko; “Suijō ōkan” (1988) by Sakiyama Tami; “Onna aya ori uta” (1985) by Kishaba Naoko; “Heiwa dōri to nazukerareta machi o aruite” (1989) by Medoruma Shun; “Wakanaka no raihōsha” (1986) by Shiraishi Yayoi; “Meishin” (1986) by Shiraishi Yayoi; “Toshibi” (1987) by Shiraishi Yayoi; “Kuni no hana” (1989) by Higa Tatsuo; “Gogo no matsuri” (1987) by Eba Hideshi; and “Shinjō Matsu no tenshi” (1989) by Tokuda Tomoko.

<sup>269</sup> “Hone” (1973) by Shima Tsuyoshi; “Sotetsu no mura” (1977) by Arasaki Kyōtarō; “Satōkibi” (1979) by Taba Mitsuko; “Umi hashiru” (1980) by Nakawaka Naoko; “Iro wa nioe to” (1981) by Minami Ankan; “Kamo no yukue” (1981) by Ikeda Masatoshi; “Hahatachi onnatachi” (1982) by Nakandakari Hatsu; “Hotaru” (1982) by Kobashi Kei; “Heiwa dōri to nazukerareta machi o aruite” (1986) by Medoruma Shun; “Onna ayaori uta” (1985) by Kishaba Naoko; “Meishi” (1986) by Shiraishi Yayoi; “Gogo no matsuri” (1987) by Eba Hideshi; “Toshibi” (1987) by Shiraishi Yayoi; “Kagerō no hi” (1987) by Hirata Kentarō; and “Shinjō Matsu no tenshi” (1989) by Tokuda Tomoko.

<sup>270</sup> Franziska Seraphim, *War Memory and Social Politics in Japan, 1945-2005* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2006), 167.

Firstly, there is a generation whose members have personal experiences of the war as adults. Secondly, the first generation is followed by those who experienced the war as children and adolescents. Finally, those who were born after the war and therefore have no direct, personal experiences thereof constitute the youngest postwar generation based on one's wartime experiences. It is notable that in Japanese there are specific words to categorize different generations: *senzenha*, *senchūha*, and *sengoha*, or prewar generation, war generation, and postwar generation, respectively. These words define generational identities in terms of the ways in which people of different age groups, specifically generations, experienced the war.

Keiko Matsuki's analysis of a generational group called *Shōwa hitoketa* (*Shōwa* single-digit) is a case in point. The *Shōwa* single-digit reference is to those who were born between 1926 (*Shōwa* 1) and 1934 (*Shōwa* 9). Those who belong to this *Shōwa* single-digit generation "experienced World War II as children and adolescents."<sup>271</sup>

Discussing the act of remembering among those who belong to the *Shōwa* single-digit generation, Matsuki states that

Today, as the label shows, their generational identity is inseparable from the discourse on *Showa*, particularly as the era of war and chaos. Furthermore, it is inseparable from their distinctive memory of the wartime as institutionally mobilized young patriots, and from their experience of the ideological disjunction following the seemingly abrupt defeat of the nation.<sup>272</sup>

As such, generational identities are defined in relation to wartime experiences of the members of the generation in question. In a way, those who belong to this group are united with their common wartime experiences.

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<sup>271</sup> Keiko Matsuki, "Negotiation of Memory and Agency in Japanese Oral Narrative Accounts of Wartime Experiences," *Ethos* 28 no. 4 (December 2000): 534.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*

Thus, it seems reasonable to assert that each generation experiences events of the time in which they live, at least to a certain extent. For instance, in the case of Okinawa, the Battle of Okinawa was a large-scale event that people on mainland Okinawa and other islands under attack were inevitably involved. Thus, on one hand it seems only natural that many Okinawan authors focus on interactions across generational boundaries in their narratives on postwar Okinawa.

This being said, however, such a generational model relies on the idea that each generation has its own shared, collective experiences, and probably memories, of past events. The model is limited in its scope because it does not encompass assumed heterogeneous experiences and perspectives *within* a generation. The whole range of possible individual differences must be acknowledged through such lenses as gender, ethnicity, and class. Seraphim contends,

Indeed, the interest groups' use of 'generation' as a tool to understand the transmission of memory over time was as pervasive as it was undifferentiated. With little variation, discussion simply pitted the 'war generation' (*senchūha*) against the "postwar generation" (*sengoha*) – that is, those with personal war experience against those without. The 'prewar generation' (*senzenha*) received much less attention, except in the context of determining legal responsibility. This generational discourse was about agency in the production and consumption of memory, not about concrete war experience.<sup>273</sup>

The generational model may not suffice to deal with the act of memory "production and consumption." In this respect, it is notable that Okinawan authors' descriptions of recollection and memory transmission do not necessarily follow the conventional *senzenha-senchūha-sengoha* model. They show different ways in which memories of the war are produced and also consumed within a generation. In this way, these authors have reconfigured the international relationships. As I will explore later, Nakandakari's

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<sup>273</sup> Seraphim, *War Memory and Social Politics in Japan*, 167.

“Mothers/Women” is one such narrative.<sup>274</sup>

Another perspective that may be important in analyzing Okinawan authors’ focus on relationships across generational boundaries is that especially in Okinawa, one’s link with their ancestors is often highlighted. One’s relationship with ancestors plays a central role in religious beliefs and practices in Okinawa. In *Okinawa daihyakka jiten* (The Encyclopedia of Okinawa), the practice of ancestral worshipping in Okinawa is explained as follows:

It is possible for a human being to maintain certain roles and status after he or she died and continue to be part of the web of social relations of the society to which they had belonged to while they were alive without completing their roles as a social being upon death [...] The folklore world of Amami and Okinawa is often depicted as ancestors-oriented societies. As seen in this, the practice of ancestral worshipping and ancestral rituals are at the core of the belief system of Amami and Okinawa.<sup>275</sup>

According to Aguni Kyōko,

In Okinawan folk religion, the rituals of ancestral worshipping, which center on the presence of ancestors, has a significant importance. When an Okinawan narrates his or her ‘self,’ it is often defined in terms of his or her relationship to close and distant ancestors, and people are strongly interested in them.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> Okamoto Keitoku refers both to generational commonality and differences within a generation in his analysis of “Mothers/Women,” in Okamoto, *Gendai bungaku ni miru Okinawa no jigazō*, 217-21. For instance, as for the difference within a generation, Nakandakari portrays that the young protagonists have different attitudes toward Grandma Kamado.

<sup>275</sup> Japanese original: 人は死によって社会的存在としてのその機能を終了するのではなく、死後も一定の地位と役割を保って生前属した社会の社会関係の網の目に位置しつづけることが可能である。（中略）奄美、沖縄の民俗社会は祖先志向的な社会と称されることがあるように、その固有信仰の核に祖先崇拜ないし祖先祭祀を有している。In “Okinawa o shiru jiten” Henshū Iinkai 「沖縄を知る事典」編集委員会, ed., *Okinawa daihyakka jiten* 沖縄を知る事典 (Tōkyō: Nichigai Asoshiētsu, 2000), s.v. “sosen sūhai.”

<sup>276</sup> Japanese original: 沖縄の民俗信仰では、祖先を軸にした祖先祭祀の世界は重要な意味を持っている。「自ら」を語る際に、近い・遠い祖先との関係から位置付けることが多く、人々の関心も高い。In *Ibid.*, s.v. “tōtōmē (ihai).”

This shows that for people in Okinawa the present self is understood in terms of the inseparable link with his or her ancestors. This belief system itself does not, however, fully explained another commonality among many Okinawan authors to highlight the characters of elderly men and women in their narratives. What is more, why is the figure of an elderly *woman* often central to the narratives' development in postwar Okinawan fiction produced by both male and female authors?

Analyzing literary works that won or received an honorable mention for the Ryūkyū Shinpō Literary Prize for Short Stories, Nakahodo points out the tendency among literary works in the 1980s to depict what is native to Okinawa through highlighting the lives of elderly members of the Okinawan society.<sup>277</sup> As for the motives of Okinawan authors commonly to depict elders in their narratives, Nakahodo argues that this tendency reflects the fact that Okinawa is known for its residents' longevity as well as that the elders are “the ones who bear witness to history and who retain what is native [to Okinawa].”<sup>278</sup>

Furthermore, Nakahodo states that many authors highlight female characters such as grandmothers and mothers, rather than grandfathers and fathers.<sup>279</sup> In regard to this tendency among Okinawan authors to focus on women, Nakando points out that “the perspective that it is no other social group but women who live what is native [to

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<sup>277</sup> Nakahodo Masanori 仲程昌徳, “Okinawa, Amerika, Yamato: Ryūkyū Shinpō tanpenshōsetsushō kasaku nijūnen” オキナワ・アメリカ・ヤマト - 琉球新報短編小説賞・佳作二〇年, in *Ryūkyū Shinpō tanpenshōsetsushū: “Ryūkyū Shinpō tanpenshōsetsushō” jushō sakuhin* 琉球新報短編小説集: 「琉球新報短編小説賞」受賞作品, ed. Ryūkyū Shinpōsha 琉球新報社 (Naha-shi: Ryūkyū Shinpōsha, 1993), 378-81.

<sup>278</sup> Japanese original: 歴史の証言者そして土俗の保持者. In *Ibid.*, 379.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*, 380.

Okinawa] itself” influences the tendency more than the fact that men’s average life expectancy is shorter than that of women.<sup>280</sup>

These features are shared in “Mothers/Women,” in which the theme of postwar Okinawa as a place of contestations is depicted through intergenerational memory transmission among Okinawan *women* of three different generations. The relationship between the youngest and eldest is particularly significant to the narrative’s development. In this way, “Mothers/Women” addresses the difficulties of transmitting narratives of wartime experiences from generation to generation and that of listening to the “unspeakable” voices of war survivors.

### **Transmitting Memories across Generational Boundaries**

By showing that Grandma Kamado’s painful past is shared by Misa despite many deadlocks that inhibit intergenerational memory transmission, Nakandakari explores the possibility of overcoming such difficulty in memory production and reception. Pertinent to this success may be, for one thing, the fact that Grandma Kamado mistakenly believes that Misa is her own daughter, Yoshiko, who died during the war. Without this belief, she might have been unable to spell out her past. When Grandma Kamado asks her “daughter,” Toyo, about Misa’s identity, Toyo explains that she is her own daughter. This places Misa, who now plays the role of Grandma Kamado’s “granddaughter,” in line with the imaginary blood relationship formed between Grandma Kamado and Toyo. This identification is involuntarily falsified when Misa experiences Grandma Kamado’s nightmare, during which Grandma Kamado wrongly identifies Misa as her own daughter. Falsely identifying Misa as her daughter, Grandma Kamado shouts at Misa.

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<sup>280</sup> Japanese original: 土俗そのものを生きているのは、とりもなおさず女性たちであるという見方。In Nakahodo, “Okinawa, Amerika, Yamato,” 380.

This change in identity to an imaginary mother-daughter relationship may be stressing that mother-daughter linkage is vital to memory transmission. The text shows, however, that intergenerational memory transmission is not necessarily a mother-daughter phenomenon. In other words, a mother/woman's past memory can be transmitted to her granddaughter. Forming an imaginary mother-daughter relationship, Grandma Kamado seems comfortable around Toyo. This does not necessarily lead Grandma Kamado to narrate her past to Toyo. Notably, it is Misa who experiences the direct memory transmission in the form of a nightmare. One may argue that Misa's encounter with a memory chip of Grandma Kamado's past is, on the one hand, based on a "mother-daughter" relationship because Grandma Kamado identifies Misa as her own daughter during the transmission. On the other hand, the memory transmission goes beyond this mother-daughter bond because of Misa's actual identity.

In the end, Grandma Kamado's memory successfully reaches down – in the hierarchy of generations – to Misa, who has no wartime experiences and who is not related by blood to Grandma Kamado. In this way the narrative shows that the memories of those who have direct wartime experiences as adults are not necessarily transmitted in order, that is, from one generation to the next one. Indeed, the young generation's "recollection" of the war is essential in keeping their elders' past alive. As time goes by, these young people's roles become more crucial than ever for their elders' past memories to be transmitted.

Thus the text's portrayal of successful communication between Grandma Kamado and Misa debunks the myth that "postmemory" is a hindrance to the past. Contrarily, it shows that those who practice "postmemory" possess the potential to embark on



exploring the past. Hirsch claims that “the curiosity and passion that shape the postmemory of survivor children” are their “desire to know and to feel.”<sup>281</sup> In other words, that the younger generation has no direct experience of the past provokes their curiosity toward time and space to which they have access only through their imagination and creation. The young generation’s “desire to know and feel” drives and helps them to “remember” their elders’ past despite many challenges and limitation. At the same time, due to their lack of experience, the young people are apparently better at detaching themselves from past events they hear about from their elders. Earlier, I have noted that someone who experiences an event can hardly be a witness at the time of the event’s occurrence. Instead, he or she may be absorbed in the situation rather than observing it from an outsider’s point of view. In “Mothers/Women,” however, Misa manages to witness Grandma Kamado’s past from within while maintaining her outsider position. In sum, the sense of detachment that is supposedly present among many young people does not necessarily impede the communication of memory production and reception. For this to happen, the young people need to maintain a curious mind and a sense of attachment such as Misa’s toward Grandma Kamado. Without this sense of compassion, Misa may not have been able to see the link between the past and present.

In sum, “Mothers/Women” portrays, firstly, the transmission of wartime memories across generations, and secondly, the significance of memories in the construction of Okinawan postwar identity. The title of the story, “Hahatachi onnatachi” (Mothers/Women), points to the importance of collective effort of women who either have personal experiences of the war as a child or have no such experiences as adults. It

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<sup>281</sup> Hirsch, *Family Frames*, 129. The term “postmemory” is thus taken from Hirsch’s concept.

is noteworthy that the title is “Hahatachi onnatachi,” not “Hahatachi to onnatachi” (Mothers *and* Women). I therefore translated the title as “Mothers/Women.” After all, Nakandakari seems to emphasize the importance of the coalition between a mother, in this case Grandma Kamado, and her “daughter,” Toyo, and “granddaughter,” Misa. Grandma Kamado is a fore-mother both to Toyo and Misa in terms of her adult personal experiences of the Battle of Okinawa. Apparently, Grandma Kamado relates to the war differently from Toyo and Misa’s approaches to this monumental event. Regardless of their age differences, both Toyo and Misa stand in a similar position where their recollection, which depends largely on their imagination, is concerned. In fact, Toyo, asked by Misa if she remembers anything about the war, answers that she is too young to remember it well now. It appears that belonging to different generations provides individuals with different sets of experiences although each individual’s experience within a generation is distinctive.

In regard to the act of recollection by individuals who have no or a little personal experience of the war, however, the text suggests that one’s generational identity does not necessarily determine the degree to which someone associates himself or herself with past events and those who lived through a particular time period. In this sense, the relationship between Toyo and Misa may correspond to what E. Ann Kaplan calls “transgenerational but horizontal mother-daughter bonding.”<sup>282</sup> In their horizontal relationship, Toyo and Misa have both the potentials and limitations of “remembering” Grandma Kamado’s past. Toyo and Misa need to learn from each other. They revive

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<sup>282</sup> E. Ann Kaplan, “Politics, Psyche and Feminine Time: Nancy Meckler’s Sister, My Sister and Pratibha Parmar’s Memsahib Rita,” in *Feminist Time against Nation Time: Gender, Politics, and the Nation-State in an Age of Permanent War* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2008), 66.

Grandma Kamado's memory collaboratively, in that it is Toyo who initially brings Grandma Kamado into the household but it is Misa who eventually shows her understanding of the unrelenting influence of wartime experiences upon the present. In sum, the title suggests that although they belong to different generations, they share being women and their collective act was vital for wartime memories to be passed down. Through establishing rapport with Grandma Kamado by mutually witnessing Grandma Kamado's wartime memories, Misa comes to be aware of the link between Grandma Kamado and herself. The realization of the unshakable link between the present and past grants Misa the strength to take a step forward toward her future.

## CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have pursued two main questions about postwar Okinawan literature: the question of how memory is transmitted, along gender lines, about a traumatic past through the generations and the question of *yuta* operating as transmitters, mediators, and anchors of cultural identity under the threat of foreign influence.

Matsuyo in “Maze” and Grandma Kamado in “Mothers/Women” are treated in a similar manner. Namely, people are scornful of Matsuyo and Grandma Kamado’s words and deeds. It is especially noteworthy that both Ōshiro and Nakahodo portray male characters as the most aggressive opponents against their female protagonists. In “Maze,” it was Matsuyo’s lover, Tamai. He gives up on Matsuyo, insisting that people will not listen to Matsuyo because her beliefs about *yuta* are not part of any of the major religions. In “Mothers/Women,” Misa’s lover, Yoshikawa, despises her when she tries to explain how Grandma Kamado is tormented by her traumatic wartime experiences. Showing little understanding toward Misa and Grandma Kamado, he concludes that Grandma Kamado is mentally ill and also that Misa is not normal as she shows her willingness to lend her ears to what Grandma Kamado is trying to express through her demonstration. In both “Maze” and “Mothers/Women,” these male characters are in an authoritative position: Tamai works for the Okinawan government and Yoshikawa has a connection with SDF. As a school teacher, Yoshikawa is not a member of SDF himself. He, however, encourages his students to join in SDF. As Misa comes to realize that Grandma Kamado’s opposition against SDF has to do with her wartime experiences. Misa grows increasingly concerned over Yoshikawa’s support for SDF.

Despite people's mockeries, the female protagonists in both "Maze" and "Mothers/Women" strongly attempt to determine directions of their life on their own initiatives. In "Maze," Matsuyo decides to fulfill her task as a *yuta* and is determined to do anything to offer her prayers at a sacred space located inside a U.S. military base. "Mothers/Women" ends with a scene in which Misa decides to part from Yoshikawa and pursue her own life without him.

Thus, both Matsuyo in "Maze" and Misa in "Mothers/Women" achieve independence as they gradually establish their own sense of value. In both stories, the female characters' pursuits of their personal identities gain support from other women. In "Maze," at first it was Matsuyo's grandmother who was most understanding of Matsuyo. Even after her grandmother had passed away, Matsuyo sought advice from her grandmother. Just as Matsuyo heard voices from ancestral deities, she was also capable of receiving messages from her deceased grandmother. In the end, Matsuyo gains support from her colleague, Junko, and Matsuyo and Junko work corroboratively to make Matsuyo's desire of offering her prayers inside the military base. In "Mothers/Women," the bond among women of different generations is emphasized.

In addition to women's collaboration, both stories show that what is native to Okinawa, *yuta* beliefs and practices in "Maze" and memories of the Battle of Okinawa in "Mothers/Women," is the source of conflict and at the same time that of unification among the people of Okinawa. The system of *yuta* beliefs has created collisions among Okinawan people throughout the history of Okinawa. At the same time, people have turned to *yuta* women, especially at difficult moments in their personal lives. Wartime memories are destructive, particularly to those who have personal experiences thereof.

As seen in “Mothers/Women,” however, these painful memories of the war may establish a rapport among the people of Okinawa across generational boundaries. “Maze” shows that although Matsuyo’s *yuta* identity has caused conflicts among people, it also gives her, and also Junko, the strength to stand on their own feet and move toward the future. In a similar manner, “Mothers/Women” shows that Misa’s understanding toward Grandma Kamado has created a friction between her and her lover. In the end, however, her experience of interacting with Grandma Kamado and having a glimpse of her traumatic past, which still torments Grandma Kamado in the present, enables Misa to establish her own sense of value and make a decision about her own life.

Both stories’ portrayals of young Okinawan women’s pursuits of their personal identities in the face of different values parallel the struggle of Okinawan people at that time. In other words, the kind of challenges that these protagonists are confronted with are similar to those of the Okinawan people at that time; namely, the difficult task of answering the question of how Okinawan society should be conceptualized. Both stories describe postwar Okinawa as a place of collisions: There are a variety of ideas, beliefs, and practices *among* the people of Okinawa. Without denying or rejecting such hybrid aspects of Okinawa, Ōshiro and Nakandakari suggest that what is native to Okinawa is not simply a cause of conflict: it also establishes the link between people and the firm ground of identity for the people of Okinawa to take the initiative and show who they are.

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